

Dear Friend,

We are honored to have you at our 50th anniversary! God is good. Please keep this packet with you throughout the retreat weekends. To keep costs down we did not print many extra. In this packet you will find the following items:

1. Our schedule of events for the week
2. A brief history of the Exodus / Bay Shore missionary endeavor
3. The orders for our times of worship
4. Question Cards for our panel discussions (front pocket)
5. Questionnaire results

Please note the following important announcements:

1. We will likely have to share hymnals throughout the weekend, and especially on Sunday. If you have a hymnal, take the time to look around you and see a brother or sister without. Thank you for your help.
2. Maggie Springall has volunteered to take pictures throughout the weekend. If you would like a copy of all these pictures then we will mail them to you on a CD. Please go to the registration table and put your address on one of the CD sized manila envelopes and place \$3 in the envelope for the cost of shipping. There is a box at the registration table marked for you to deposit the addressed envelopes.
3. We need questions for our panel discussions! Please take the time prior to our panels and fill out a question or two (or five!) for our panel discussions. We will have two panel discussions, one comprised of our past and present ministers, and another for those involved with Shiloh and Faith Corps. There is a box at the registration table marked for your questions.
4. We need readers for our worship services throughout the weekend. If you would like to read please see Jesse, and he will give you an assignment.
5. We are happy to announce that Dr. Paul Casner will be our guest speaker on Saturday afternoon. Paul was the minister for the West Islip Church of Christ during the nineties. He is the current senior pastor of Donelson Presbyterian church in Nashville, TN.
6. If you ordered a polo shirt they are available at the registration table. If you have not ordered one and would like one, they are \$20. There is a limited quantity. All proceeds collected from the sale of the polo shirts will go to Health Talents International.
7. Last year we collected the best recipes of our congregation and put together a cookbook to raise money for Health Talents International. We have twenty copies for sale at the registration table. They will go fast! Get yours in a hurry. The cost for the cookbook is \$10. If you would like a copy and we run out please see Jesse Pettengill.
7. Please note that during the dedication of our Memorial Garden we will take up an offering for the West Islip Church of Christ Memorial Scholarship Fund. Each year we give a scholarship to our graduating seniors. This fund was started with money donated to the church in memory of Barbara Gibbons.

Enjoy your stay! May the Lord bless your time here.

Kindly, Jesse Pettengill

**West Islip Church of Christ
50th Anniversary Celebration
Schedule
June 28th-30th**

***All events take place on the grounds of 600 Montauk Highway, West Islip NY, 11795*

***Child care is provided from 9:30-5:30 on Saturday*

Friday (June 28th)

6:00-9:00 PM "New York Style" Pizza Fellowship (informal come & go)

Saturday (June 29th)

9:00-10:00 Light Breakfast ("Long Island" bagels)

10:00-10:45 Hymn & Prayer Service

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 Panel Discussion (Ministers Past and Present)

[Bounce house available for the children from 12 PM--8 PM]

12:00-1:00 Lunch (Heroes, Chips, and Cookies)

1:00-1:45 West Islip Church of Christ Memorial Garden Dedication Service

1:45--2:15 Break

2:15-3:00 Guest Speaker--Dr. Paul Casner (Minister West Islip Church of Christ 1992-1997)

3:00-3:30 Break

3:30--4:30 Small group discussions

4:30-5:00 Break

5:00-5:30 Well Wishes From Friends and Ministry Partners

5:30-7:00 Cookout

****Evening Hymns****

Sunday (June 30th)

9:30-11:00 Light Breakfast ("Entenmanns")--Faith Corps and Shiloh Panel

11:00-12:00 Worship

12:00-2:00 Lunch (Flavor Crisp Fried Chicken)

50th Anniversary

Hymn & Prayer Service Saturday AM

Welcome

****Call to worship (in unison)**

**Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise.
Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your
enemies cringe before you.
All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name." Selah
Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.
Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,
who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.
Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.
I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue.**

****Praise Medley--Hymn #'s: 2, 3, & 4 (dotted verses only)**

First Lesson--Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (Pg. *143) & Joshua 4:1-4 (Pg. *170)

Exodus Bay Shore--A Short History

Hymn # 26 God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Prayer for the past

Second Lesson--2 Corinthians 4:1-15 (Pg. *939) *Reading - David*

Submission Medley--Hymn #'s 552, 553, & 554 (dotted verses only)

Prayer for the present

****Gospel Lesson—Matthew 7:12-29 (Pg. *788-9)**

Hymn # 524 I Know Whom I Have Believed

Prayer for the future

****Benedictory Hymn (Hymn # 705 A Common Love--Bob Riggs)**

** Page numbers for the pew bibles*

****Congregation standing**

50th Anniversary

West Islip Church of Christ Memorial Garden Dedication Service

Welcome

****Call To Worship (Revelation 7:9-17; Pg. *999)**

Leader: After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying:"

People: "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Leader: And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing:

People: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Leader: Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him,

People: "Sir, you are the one that knows."

Leader: Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

People: They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Special Music--My Shepherd Shall Supply My Need

First Lesson--Isaiah 55:1-3; 6-13 (Pg. *598)

Hymn # 595 I Come to the Garden Alone

Second Lesson--1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (Pg. *927)

Hymn # 477 There Is a Place of Quiet Rest

**Gospel Lection--John 12:1-28

An Invitation to Remember

Offering (see note below)

Hymn # 490 It Is Well With My Soul

The Reading of the Names

Special Music--For God So Loved the World

**Benediction (from Revelation 21:3-4; Pg. *1007-8)

See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.

*Page numbers for the pew Bibles

**Congregation Standing

Special Note on the offering: When Barbara Gibbons passed away, many who knew her and loved her gave monetary gifts in her memory to the West Islip Church of Christ to be used generally for "benevolent" purposes. The Outreach Committee was given the task of deciding how these monies should be used. Because of Barbara's support of education, both in her work with the New York Public Library, and in her private donations to students, it was decided by the committee to create a memorial scholarship that would be given annually to a member or members of the congregation entering post secondary school education. This recommendation was passed along to the council, and it was met with their commendation. During the decision time other monies were donated to the church in memory of George Dimidjian, Dora Saenz, and Dennis Cahill. It was decided to add these monies to the scholarship fund and to grow the fund through other donations that come to the WICOC in memory of individuals, and by taking up special collections at special services. The fund is to be placed in an investment vehicle and to be drawn upon when the West Islip Church of Christ has a graduating senior entering college or tech/trade school.

Memorial Bricks

Judy and Bill Baker

Lamar Baker

Vernadine Batcha

Bruce Beechley

Tom Blake

Virginia Brack

Ellal Ruth Brannon

Hazel Buice

Walter Burch

Larry Cardwell

Rachel Carucci

Marian Collier

Dee Colvett

Dennis Conaway

Bennie Cook

Lou Durr

Angela Marie Fermin

Bruce Freeman

Verna Garrett

Emmit and Lilly Gentry

Barbara Gibbons

Bob Goodrich

Roscoe Grant

Brian Hale

James Hance

Howie Hodgson

Alfred and Clellie Holman

Don "Pete" Johnson

Jacob Keoteklian

Knar Keoteklian Apelian

Magnolia McCall

Dickie Masters

Dave Meadows

Shirley and Mary Belle Morgan

Judy Ogletree Guden

Braulio Perez

Doris Pidcock

Linda Plankenhorn

Denny Porterfield

Roger Powell

Jan Ragland Klinzing Benedict

Pat Reaser

Bobby Robinson

Phil Roseberry

Martha Russell

Dora Saenz

Carolyn Salmon

Mary Alice Scott

Ruth and Pearce Scott

Sandy Spaulding

Ronnie Stokes

Thelma Stringfellow

John Tanner

Herman Van Dyke

Forrest and Kay Wells

50th Anniversary

Saturday PM Worship (Paul Casner Guest Speaker)

Welcome

Call to Worship (Hymn # 718 We Shall Assemble)

There Came a Time (Part 1)--A reading for three voices

Hymn # 662 All to Jesus I Surrender (verse 1)

There Came a Time (Part 2)--A reading for three voices

Hymn # 662 All to Jesus I Surrender (verse 2)

There Came a Time (Part 3)--A reading for three voices

Hymn # 662 All to Jesus I Surrender (verse 3)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts

Psalm 84: 1-5; 10-12 (Pg. *472-3)--In unison

My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah

Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Introduction

Guest Speaker--Dr. Paul Casner

Benedictory Hymn # 18 Faithful Love

Exodus / Bay Shore

The Church in West Islip, New York was established as a result of the EXODUS/Bay Shore movement of 1963, wherein 85 families and numerous singles of the Church in August of that year left their homes and jobs in 11 states and moved as much as 1800 miles to the Bay Shore area of Long Island, New York to establish a congregation for the Lord's Church. These families and individuals established new homes and obtained new jobs on Long Island. The congregation was born on Sunday, August 4, 1963, when 137 people met for worship in the Hebrew School building of the Jewish Center of Bay Shore, which had been loaned to the EXODUS group. Two weeks later, three adjoining store buildings in downtown Bay Shore were rented and renovated to serve as the meeting place for the next year. Construction of a new building on the congregation's property in West Islip (3 miles west of Bay Shore) commenced that fall. Formal opening was held on September 13th, 1964, by which time membership had grown to 236.

Dwain Evans, the first minister and initiator of the Exodus recently wrote the following in an open email letter. "When Barbara and I left Texas with Lisa and Stephanie, we left secure in the knowledge that we had the financial support to meet our needs. But this was not true with most who came. Rather it was one of the most incredible examples of faith that I know of in the 20th century. We had an employment conference at the Baker Hotel in Dallas where 150 of those planning to go were interviewed. To my knowledge not one single person got a job offer. Buoyed only by their faith in God, they came any way. They came in cars pulling trailers, in buses that had the seats removed with their household possessions, even on a motorcycle. It was the modern day equivalent of Abraham's going out not knowing where he was to go.

Don Haymes made it to the Sagtikos Parkway with a borrowed credit card where his used Morris Minor gave up the ghost. Don slept in an attic and ate bread and peanut butter until he got a job with the Smithtown News. Howie and Margaret Hodgson arrived on Long Island with \$6 in their pocket. They soon signed contracts to teach.

Jim and Beverly Kite arrived and rented a house. When Jim walked into Grumman to interview, he was told, "Mr. Kite, we have never had an opening for someone with your qualifications until today." He went to work at Grumman. James Hance arrived in a Chevrolet station wagon and I think a pickup truck and seven children soon to be eight with no assurance of anything. Toler and Ella Ruth Brannon arrived and lived in Richard and Carolyn Salmon's basement until the Salmon's moved into their new house.

One thing we all realized was that all this was not about us. It was not about me. It was not about any of us. It was rather a marvelous example of the power of the Holy Spirit "at work within us" who was "able to give far more abundantly than all that we could ask or think." Let all the glory and honor be to the God who made it all possible." —Dwain

This congregation is here and has accomplished what it has because of God's vision for us. He has graced us to be involved in many kinds of ministry over the years, from foreign missions to daycare, from food pantry to pioneering the inclusion of women in all aspects of the church. Our history was in His hands as is our present. We can rest and work in the certainty that, half a century into the life of this congregation, our future is also in His hands.

Questionnaire

Participants: Judy Shouse Levy, Richard Scott, June Constance Daniels Nicholson, Nina Hayes, Wallace Collier, Freda Elliott Baker, Paul Casner, Teresa Russell Nystrom

What is your favorite hymn and why? (Judy Shouse Levy) I Surrender All (Because it says it all)
(Richard Scott) All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name. (It, to me, is the ultimate proclamation, in song, to Jesus. Period.) (June Nicholson) In Loving Kindness Jesus Came (Nina Hayes) How does one choose, when one has been influenced by songs and hymns from birth? I think my favorite "Golden Oldie" would be "Amazing Grace" because to me it says it all about how I'm going to get to heaven – through God's almighty grace. I have some "New Wave" songs which mean a lot to me, as well: "Love One Another" (The Greatest Command) – This should be the theme song of Christianity, I think. It is all the commands wrapped up in one. Additionally there are songs by contemporary artists which I love, Twila Paris and Rich Mullins being two of them. "Awesome God" and "Step by Step" by Rich Mullins are just two of many. Then a hymn not that new, "Love For All" that touches my heart. It's about the prodigal who still receives his Father's love, after all he's done. (Wallace Collier) Oh Master, Let Me Walk With Thee. This was sung at our wedding with the words changed to let us walk with Thee. This was a prophecy of our life together and is a memory I cherish, though she is with the Lord. (Freda) Right now, I love to sing "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing", because it was performed at my husband's memorial service in May 2011, to the accompaniment of an acoustic guitar and with a slight country-western sound. When I sing it I remember Lamar, and a sense of peace, albeit still bittersweet peace, fills my heart. (Paul) My Hope is Built On Nothing Less – I like the theology of grace in this hymn. (Teresa) It is Well With My Soul – It has always been a favorite because of the intensity yet tenderness of the words. The song reminds me of the promise that even though we are parted by death in this life, Jesus paid the ultimate price for us so that we can all be together with him.

What is your favorite bible passage(s)? (Richard Scott) - Romans 8:28 - And we know that God works for good in all things to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose.
(June) John 14:1-31 – Jesus is the way to the Father and Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit. I want to live as he lived – always a servant to others, and to myself that I can remain healthy in mind, body and spirit. I love life, and I want to share it with you all both on the earth and later in heaven. (Nina) Another hard one - I believe there is not ONE Scripture which could be my favorite, but MANY, so how does one choose? I think that on a day-to-day basis, I would have a different one, depending upon where I am mentally, physically, and spiritually for that day. Here is my effort at narrowing them down: In the Old Testament, I like Job because his faith never waivers while defending himself before his "friends." At the end when he questions God and God answers, he sees why he should not question God. The book of Psalms is my "go to" book in any kind of weather – whatever the mood, and I love the hymns we sing that are directly from them. I suppose Lamentations 3:22 ff is one of my most favorite. In the middle of all the author's woes he still finds hope in God's love. The New Testament is no different, but I love

John's books of love, Paul's epistles of Grace, and James' attack on the tongue. If I pick one in the New Testament it would be Philip. 4:4 – Rejoice in Lord always (Wallace) I Corinthians 13 – the Love chapter (Freda) Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.
(Paul) I John 4:9-19 (Teresa) John 3:16

What years did you attend the West Islip Church of Christ? (Judy Levy) From the beginning until June 1965 (Richard Scott) 1964 - 1965, 1966 – 1972 (June Nicholson) June 1963 – July 1964 when I married Kenneth Nicholson and moved to Flint, Michigan and then to Arlington, Vermont, where I have lived from 1965 until 2013 and still do. (Nina Hayes) – 1965 -1987 (Wallace Collier) August 23, 1963 – 1980 (Freda) August 1963 – December 1973 (Paul Casner) 1992-1999 (Teresa) My family was the first in place on Long Island.

Describe how you came to attend the West Islip Church of Christ. (Judy Levy) I moved from Abilene, Texas, with my parents, Aubrey and Emma Shouse who were part of the original families that came with Exodus Bay Shore. We came to NY when I was 7 (after 1st grade) and left when I was 9 (after 3rd grade). We left due to my father's health. We worked with the Exodus Bay Shore group until after they moved into the new building in West Islip. I was baptized in that building on my 9th birthday, September 20, 1964. My brother Alan B. Shouse was baptized that day as well. He was 14. My mother and father taught school while in NY which gave them many stories over the years. My mother taught in Brentwood and my father in Patchogue. I was very young but I have very fond memories of times in West Islip. The experience left such a mark on me, I moved back to the northeast in 1979. I took a job in New Haven, Connecticut. Later I went to law school in Brooklyn, NY, and presently I live in West Windsor, NJ where I worship with the Princeton church of Christ. I never lost my love of the people or place and have made my home here. My parents thrived back in Texas, and my father served as elder for a period with the Parkview church of Christ in Odessa, TX. His job with the IRS had them move several times over the years. They settled in the end in Midland, TX and only moved to Frisco, TX (north Dallas) when they were in a nursing home. Their health issues escalated in the last years and they entered assisted living in 2007 and later nursing home in 2010. Wanting them to be closer, my brothers (William and Alan) moved them to Frisco where they lived. After a brief illness, my mom suddenly from a heart attack on July 17, 2012. My father followed her on November 25, 2012. Participating with Exodus Bay Shore was always a highlight in their lives and was a prominent part of their obituaries.

(Richard Scott) I worked at Camp Shiloh, New Jersey the summers of 1959 and 1960, and was looking for a way to return to the area near NYC.

(June) As I graduated from Abilene Christian College in Abilene, Texas, in 1963 I moved to Bay Shore as a part of the Exodus Bay Shore to Long Island, NY. I was a teacher of speech pathology in the North Babylon Public Schools, and I was a sister in the West Islip Church of Christ.

(Nina) I knew of the Exodus through my friend, Karen Van Rheenen. Karen and I had attended the same high school, Crowley's Ridge Academy, and we had always planned to be roommates in college at Harding. That never worked out. She was a year ahead of me, and when I got a better scholarship offer from Freed-Hardeman, I went there first, with the intention of being her roommate two years later when I got to Harding. Guess what? She completed her degree requirements in three years, and went off to join this new church movement in New York. When I graduated, there were school officials from Long Island who came to Harding for interviews. My co-student teacher, Anita Green, and I both interviewed for the same job. She got the job, but I flew to NY in May for 3 interviews, which Rod Spaulding had set up for me, and was hired on the third one – Mulligan Junior High in Central Islip. I came to Exodus Bay Shore with much anxiety, and I did not feel comfortable door-knocking, but one of Dwain's early sermons helped me see there were other jobs for me as part of a body. I could teach the children, and I did.

(Wallace) We were part of the first Exodus after being told 5 years earlier by Barbara Evans, my cousin, about them wanting to go back to the Mission field with vocational missionaries. They told us they were ready in Nashville in '62, where we agreed to join them in this adventure. There were just two prayers: "We need a place to live and a job" I was hired in Dallas and went with our two small children to face the challenge. We arrived on our seventh anniversary, August 23rd, though we had never been further north than Kentucky, this was an adventure that was to change our life forever. We moved into a home in Brentwood that had belonged to Marian's ex-roommate after her husband had died. It was 15 minutes from Bay Shore and 15 minutes from Smithtown, where I was to teach. We knew from the start that our prayers had been answered. (Freda) While living in Enid, Oklahoma, I heard Rod Spaulding present the Exodus/Bay Shore idea, and it spoke to something within me which I couldn't resist. I attended a retreat at Bedford Ranch, outside Fort Worth, returned to Enid, and made preparations to move to Long Island in my Volkswagen Bug. I met Jenny Massey, from Ponca City, the weekend before I left, and we caravanned together to New York, arriving the day before the first worship service was held in the Bay Shore storefronts. (Paul) As a minister. (Teresa) After a trip to the Northeast to visit family, and a very long drive to the nearest Church of Christ, my dad, Ken Russell, decided we would join the Exodus. In a matter of 6 weeks, he secured a transfer with his job at Braniff Airlines to Idlewild Airport, packed our household goods on an old Red Ball truck, and we were off. We worshipped with the Commack congregation until services began in the store front location in Bay Shore.

Name a congregant during your tenure at West Islip Church of Christ that sticks out in your mind and why. (Judy Levy) - Dwain Evans, minister, Childhood friend, Yolanda Johnson

(Richard Scott) Dwain Evans. He taught me through sermons, classes, and 1 on- 1's, that salvation is a gift, free and totally unmerited, and that Christians are reborn FOR good works. (June) Dwain and Barbara Evans led me from Augusta, Maine in 1957 to Abilene Christian College where I graduated in 1963. Then they led me to Bay Shore, where I became a member of the W. Islip Church of Christ until Ken Nicholson and I were married in the W. Islip church building. (Nina) Oh It is so hard to do this— there were so many Christine Kelly and her love for the Lord The Colliers ALL—the parents for their zeal, for their hospitality, and their absence of any kind of prejudice; the kids for just being normal kids;

the Evanses; the Conaways—same reasons as above; the Gales; the Gibbonses; the Beechleys, the Papas, the Riggses; JoLee; Diana; John and Donna; Maureen and David, whom I consider to be my very own children; Freda and Lamar; All of the Faith Corps for their willingness to go far away; and for those who went into the inner city Faith Corps; Bill Spindler’s never-failing faith; the Hances, the Grants, the Tanners for their vision for West Islip. I’m sure I forgot someone The Straughn’s were good for the time we had them, as well. (Wallace) Lou Durr and her husband, Charlie, became a part of our small group. She was a joy to us and led us to our home in West Islip, a block from their home. We were close by when she was dying of cancer, as Marian gave her shots for pain. She said she wanted to be an angel to the church when she died. The freshness of her faith touched us all in the short time she was with us. (Freda) I cannot limit this answer to just one. Three in particular are Betty Grant, Kay Wells and Vi Hance. These women felt like my “personal elders” –though female elders were not allowed to be recognized as such in the Church of Christ (Paul) Too many to mention. The entire congregation was filled with love for God and people, and that is what I and my family remember most. (Teresa) There were so many I think most of all I will remember Roger Tate letting himself in the door at our house, without knocking or ringing the doorbell. He would call out, “Hello everybody, I’m here ” Mom would run to fix him a glass of iced tea.

Name an event during your time at the West Islip Church of Christ that sticks out for you and why.

(Judy Levy) My baptism on September 20, 1964 (Richard Scott) Early in 1971, John White and I started a VBS for WI neighborhood kids, which evolved into a daycare program working fulltime.
(June) Ken and I were the first couple to be married in the church building – June 27, 1964. The building was not completed, but the wedding service, led by Dwain Evans, was a beautiful sharing of our entire church family from many parts of the USA. (Nina) What I call the “Second Split” when Warren Lewis was found out, and there was a meeting of the church members at the Hance’s house. I had never in my life dreamed such a thing would happen –that is: ALL the members would be a part of such a meeting. It was also a bad time in my personal life, as well. I had an infant and a three-year-old, and my husband had left me repeatedly. At some point, Warren was counseling him, and the three of us had had a few meetings, casual in nature (one of them was a night of crabbing off the docks in Sayville). I never felt a sense of trust or security when I was around Warren. I often called this period at WI a “burned out stump”. I felt the church was this way (often) but there were those who always helped me see why I continued attending – specifically Bill Spindler, who always seemed to have the right message for me, and also Bob Riggs. (Freda) There were many such events, but the congregation wide all-night prayer vigils, held in homes, before having to make an important decision which would impact the whole church, sticks way out in my mind. I remember signing up for a two-hour time period during the night, getting up and dressed and going to my assigned house. It felt so radical—like we really meant it (Paul) We really enjoyed lots of special times, but the Advent Suppers are particularly memorable. (Teresa) Were they called Missions Forums? I remember two. I enjoyed hearing the missionaries’ story. I also remember the Sunday afternoon of the ground breaking ceremony. A photo appeared in Newsday. I am one of 3 little girls in the background.

How did your time at the West Islip Church of Christ affect your spiritual journey?

(Judy Levy) It helped solidify my commitment to follow Christ always. (Richard Scott) Changed it from a life of trying to follow laws to a life living and attempting, because of love, to live a life patterned after Jesus' life and teachings. (June) My spiritual journey has grown closer and closer to God, Jesus and his Holy Spirit. By loving, listening to and serving all the people in my work, play, and problems,

(Nina) I had had a difficult time in my last year at Harding with my spiritual growth. I think I came to New York with a lot of fear and trepidation—I had often thought of the “whatifs” regarding mission work, but was unsure how I would handle what this church would require of me. Dwain’s sermons truly affected me. They introduced to me a new way of thinking about being a Christian. It was if I had been going through life with blinders on. One of his lessons that has always stood out to me was the one about being a part of the body (mentioned previously) and how different parts of the body have different functions. I figured I might be a little toe, and it wasn’t until I had numerous toe surgeries that I realized how important that little toe is. (Wallace) We came to convert Long Island to find out that we needed to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s leading. Following Jesus became more to me than our first commitment. After leaving to the broader community of believers, we found out there were many more followers of Jesus than we thought at first. Long Island is still a Mission field where the challenge remains to share the Gospel by word and deed. As a visitation minister I find myself with hurting people with a deep need for compassion in a world of people caught in their own web. (Freda) At West Islip I did a lot of growing up, spiritually. I learned to question certain “doctrines” that I was previously taught—such as the notion that the Holy Spirit became inactive when the Scriptures were completed. At West Islip my faith was tested, and I came through with a more rock solid faith in Christ. I think prior to the Exodus, I put my faith in the church, believing that like a man drowning, it was being in the boat that saved you. At West Islip I learned that Christ is Savior, not the boat—but regretfully not before I helped promote the boat theory in the early years of our aggressive evangelistic programs. I didn’t really know how to teach the gospel—and besides, I was a woman—but I could help facilitate the promotion of the Church of Christ. Actually, West Islip nearly spoiled me for any other congregation. After Lamar, Allison and I moved to southern California, we continued in the Church of Christ for four years. Then we bailed out and moved on to the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. In December 2009, when Lamar had his third stroke and subsequently quit going out except to the doctor, I started attending a wonderful, somewhat “progressive” Church of Christ fairly close to us. Here in Florida, I have visited several churches but have not yet decided where I will settle in. (Paul) It was wonderful to find a group of people that supported and encouraged a genuine spiritual pilgrimage. I felt West Islip was a place where I could ask tough questions in an atmosphere of love and understanding. There was a fundamental trust in God that gave all of the people at West Islip a sense of peace and confidence. They gave me a place where I could grow.

What is the message you would like to give to the future congregants of the West Islip Church of Christ?

(Judy Levy) This congregation was begun with passion for Christ and a desire from people not unlike the first disciples to reach the northeast for Christ. (Richard Scott) Stay - STAY - in Scripture. (June) I am ever so thankful, grateful, for “family”, my church family wherever I am in the world. Your

loving stimulation to read, study, work to understand the Bible has given me the strength to grow closer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. I thank God for our church, both here, and all over the world. God bless you all. (Nina) Try to live by the greatest command –Love one another. Study the scriptures all the time, and pray for guidance and wisdom, so that you can be one in the Lord.

(Wallace) Just be what you are, as living examples of the Christ in you. Listen to each other and to the Lord. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. “Without vision the people perish.” Keep the vision alive as you move into the next 50 years. (Freda) Nothing comes to mind, so I will pass on this question. (Paul) You are a part of a large family. You are never alone, because we who have been at West Islip in the past are with you in spirit. Go forward and grow in your relationship with Christ. Dare to ask new questions, try new things, and pave new paths of discipleship.