

Visiting our Communities  
of Belief

## FAITH IN OUR TOWNS



Congregants  
at prayer  
during  
service.

STEPHEN BARCELO

# Wantagh Memorial Congregational Church

*We made the  
paper again!!  
Check it out.*



### What makes it special

The congregation's "desire to discover the holy in their relationships with each other ... and how that makes a difference outside the church," Parkinson said. "I know that sounds like the typical thing that Christians try to do, but in our church I think that particular process is very poignant."

### Biggest issue

"How to make a faith community worth it to younger adults," Parkinson said, noting that younger adults today are increasingly inclined to be too busy for worship.

### Tell us about your place of worship

Send its name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and the name of the spiritual leader to:  
VOTE@NYDAILYNEWS.COM

■ **Address:** 1845 Wantagh Ave., Wantagh

■ **Religious affiliation:** United Church of Christ

■ **Web site:** www.wmcc1845.com

■ **Years in existence:** 120

■ **Pastor:** The Rev. Forrest Parkinson

■ **Services:** Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

■ **Size and character:** The progressive Protestant congregation is bound by bonds of affection, rather than doctrine or dogma, and draws about 75 members on a "good Sunday," Parkinson said. The congregants, mainly Caucasian and middle class/professional, are marked by a respect for each other's place in their spiritual journey. "We want to testify to our own experience of God, rather than test each other for believing the right things," Parkinson said, adding that a few Jewish people regularly attend service.

■ **Most prized possession:** "It is the people of the congregation," Parkinson said. "The harmony and the peace and the contact that we have with each other inspires us to live better lives."

■ **Proudest moment:** A service a few weeks ago during which about 10 couples renewed their wedding vows, Parkinson said. Some of the couples had been married more than 50 years, while others had tied the

knot more recently. "It was really a wonderful, touching event," Parkinson said, "and I think a lot of people experienced that as being a moment of real pride in how people celebrated their lives together in this church."

■ **Biggest wish-list item:** A new pastor, said Parkinson, who has served as interim pastor since the Rev. Rich Baker retired little more than a year ago after nearly 25 years as leader of the flock. Since that time, Parkinson said, the congregation's search committee has been interviewing numerous pastoral candidates, and is currently close to making a decision. "Everybody is very excited about the possibility — and they're a little nervous, of course," Parkinson said.

■ **Leaders in song:** Music Minister Ken Soule plays the organ and leads the 12-member adult choir in traditional hymns, Parkinson said.

■ **Other programs:** Sunday School (10:45 a.m.), weekly Bible Study. The Board of Christian Outreach coordinates various charitable activities for the church, including donations of food to the Interfaith Nutrition Network and the Long Island Council of Churches. The church runs an annual pumpkin sale, with the proceeds split between the congregation and the Navajo Indian Nation.

■ **Compiled by John Lauinger**