

Religion

A-10

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Teaching ESL a ministry, outreach and a 'humbling experience'

By GREGORY J. RUMMO

He was a short man with neatly combed hair and a thin black moustache. He sat alone at a long cafeteria table in the gymnasium. His struggle to make sense of the words and phrases on the piece of paper he clutched tightly in his hands was obvious. "¿Podría ayudarte?" I asked him politely, offering my help. "No can read the words," he replied. "I no have glass..." Ah, I thought to myself, he forgot his glasses. I offered mine to him. "¿Mejor?" I asked, hoping he could now see the print better. "Sí," he responded. Satisfied that he could now read the words on the paper, I left him for a few minutes only to notice that he was still struggling. And then it dawned on me: He could see the words just fine; he just couldn't understand them and he was too ashamed to admit it. But he had come to the right place.

The Madison Avenue Baptist Church in Paterson has offered a multi-year curriculum in ESL (English as a Second Language) to the Hispanic community for eight years. The Hispanic community makes up slightly more than 50 percent of the city's 150,000 residents, according to the 2000 census. Enrollment averages about 100 students per semester. Courses are offered free of charge. (There is a \$20 registration fee and students must purchase the textbooks used for each level.)

While it may seem strange that a church should be involved teaching English, there is an interesting history behind it. The American-born evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, heralded as "the greatest evangelist of the 19th century," is largely responsible for the invention of the Sunday school. While today in virtually every evangelical church in America

Sunday school means Bible study, this was not its original intention. Moody started a Sunday school in Chicago to teach English to the poorest residents of the city. He soon had more than 1,000 children and their parents attending each Sunday. Its success caught the attention of President Abraham Lincoln who visited one week in 1862.

I have been a member of The Madison Avenue Baptist Church for almost 23 years. I am a sign language interpreter, the choir director and I teach a Sunday school class to a group of young married couples. This was my first year involved in the church's ESL program.

The spring semester started in late January and the first two weeks involved two three-hour registration sessions where I was able to assist prospective students in filling out forms as well as administer oral and written tests designed to determine proficiency in the English language. Those six hours were spent conversing mostly in Spanish. It was during the second week of registration that I met the man who "left his glasses home." For the next 10 weeks, I taught what we call ESL Level 3½ — the second half of the highest level offered — to a group of four students.

While most of the language in class is necessarily English, there are plenty of times I am able to clarify a grammatical point better by explaining a similar syntax in Spanish. And before class, during the 15-minute break, and after class, there is plenty of time to mingle with the students in the hallways and use my Spanish.

After one class, we got into a discussion about the use of pronouns to replace nouns in English and, most of the time in Spanish. Several students were struggling

with the concept that in English, when you use a pronoun it really replaces the noun. Not so in Spanish in every case. Using the following example: "Cuando mi madre dice que no, le pregunto a mi padre," ("When my mother says no, I ask him, my father"). I was able to clarify this point. In English, one would simply say, "When my mother says no, I ask him," or "When my mother says no, I ask my father." In Spanish, the verb *preguntar* (to ask) requires that both the indirect object pronoun (le for him) and the noun (padre) be used in the same sentence.

As a student at Bergen Community College studying a foreign language, I was immediately able to feel the student's pain. On numerous occasions I reminded them that I could understand exactly what they were going through because I too was struggling in my Spanish class.

Additionally, I was able to incorporate into my ESL class some of the same techniques the professor was using in my Spanish class; group work, reading aloud, written homework assignments and recommending that the students listen to TV and radio programs in English and read English-language newspapers and magazines.

The benefits of the program to the community run deeper than simply teaching proficiency in English. There is an added dimension — a spiritual component — and the church accepts its responsibility to the Great Commission, to "go and make disciples of all nations," seriously.

The program's director, Michelle Reyes, confirms this. She views the ESL program not just as a classroom but as an outreach, a way to change lives and characterizes it as "a ministry ... beyond bless-



Photo courtesy of Gregory Rummo

Nora Bravo from Ecuador and Jose Gutierrez from Argentina are advanced students in the author's English class, which totals four students this semester. Some classes have as many as 30 students.

ing." Classes begin with prayer and end with a short, 15-minute Bible devotional. "The people who make it happen are ordinary people ... accomplish(ing) ... extraordinary things," she says. She's already planning the fall semester with registration scheduled to begin on Aug. 18. It is a "truly humbling experience," she adds.

Upon reflection, thinking about the man with the moustache sitting alone at the

table in the gymnasium, too ashamed to admit he couldn't read English; my involvement in the church's ESL program was, in fact, truly a humbling experience.

Gregory J. Rummo is a businessman and a writer. He is currently on sabbatical from his weekly opinion column while taking Spanish at Bergen Community College. Contact him through his Web site, GregRummo.com.

RELIGION CALENDAR, INCLUDING HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

ALLAMUCHY

Panther Valley Ecumenical Ministry, 1450 Route 517, has Sunday worship at 10 a.m. Coffee hour follows. (Rev. Dr. Mary Lou Howson, pastor; 908-852-5444 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. or visit www.pvem.net)

ANDOVER

Andover Presbyterian Church, Lake Lenape Road/Route 517, has worship service and Sunday school for children through high school at 10 a.m. The sacrament of Holy Communion is observed on the first Sunday of each month. Maundy Thursday: Ecumenical worship at 7:30 p.m. (Mark D. Smith, pastor; Church office, 973-786-5094).

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The Andover United Methodist Church, Route 517 (2.2 miles north of Route 206), has Bible study at 9 a.m., Sunday school at 9:30; worship service, including interactive children's message, at 10:30, observing Palm Sunday and New Member Sunday. Easter Sunday: Sunrise ecumenical worship service on the shore of Lake Lenape, 6:30 a.m.; Easter brunch at the church at 9; Easter worship in the church at 10:30 a.m. Easter egg hunt on the church lawn, 11:45 a.m. Handicapped accessible. (Rev. Dan Gepford, pastor; 973-786-5225 or www.bgcm-umc.org/andover/).

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The Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Newton congregation, at 64 Lawrence Road (Route 623), meets at 10 a.m. on Sunday. A discussion of the Watchtower magazine will follow.

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New Horizons Church of the Nazarene, meets Sundays at 10:30 a.m. at the American Legion, 20 Yates Ave. (Budd Brown, pastor; 973-670-5635)

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Redeemer Lutheran Church, 37 Newton-Sparta Road, worships on Palm Sunday at 8:30 a.m. with a contemporary service, and at 11 a.m. with a traditional service. Sunday school is at 9:45 a.m. for all ages. Maundy Thursday worship and Good Friday Tenebrae service both at 7:30 p.m. April 7, Lumen Christi service at 4 p.m.; Easter Sunday, regular schedule. (Rev. Thomas E. Diamond, pastor; 973-383-3945; luther95.com/RLC-NNJ)

BLAIRSTOWN

The Evangelical Free Church of Blairstown at 11 Lambert Road worships Sunday at 10:45 a.m. Christian education is held at 9:30 a.m. (Rev. Jack Kroeze, 908-362-8979)

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The First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown, 1 Main St., has worship and Sunday school at 10 a.m. Holy Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of each month. (Rev. David Harvey, 908-362-5254)

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The First United Methodist Church of Blairstown, 10 Stillwater Road, worships Sunday at 10 a.m. Handicapped accessible. (908-362-6693).

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The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 168 Route 94, has Sunday school at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday and Holy Communion service at 10:30 a.m. (908-362-9405)

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Vineyard Assembly of God meets at the Blairstown Masonic Lodge, 11 Stillwater Road on Sunday for a 10 a.m. service. (Pastor Wendell Ross, 973-300-5608).

BRANCHVILLE

The First Presbyterian Church of Branchville, 3-5 Wantage Ave., celebrates worship this Sunday at 10 a.m. with the Rev. Dr. Jefferson L. Hatch preaching. Sunday school is offered and the church is handicapped accessible. (973-948-3495; e-mail to pastorjh@ptd.net; or visit fpcbranchville.tripod.com)

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The United Methodist Church in

Branchville, 8 Broad St., has worship service at 10 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. The church is handicapped accessible. (Pastor Dennis Chung, 973-948-3749)

BYRAM

Byram Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational, charismatic, Christian Fellowship, meets at the Adam Todd Inn, 263 Route 206, Byram. Sunday service is at 10 a.m. Sunday school available for youth and children. Bible studies during the week. (Luis Rodriguez, pastor; 908-879-3119 or e-mail Pastorluis@byramchristian.org or LR0968@yahoo.com)

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The Waterloo United Methodist Church, Waterloo Village Road, has Palm Sunday service at 10 a.m. beginning at the parish house, with a musical procession to the sanctuary. Maundy Thursday, potluck supper and seder in the meeting house at 7 p.m.; Good Friday service at 7:30 p.m. Easter sunrise service will be held canal-side at 6:15 a.m. Breakfast follows. Easter Cantata at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. (Rev. David L. Jones, pastor; 973-347-7900, or visit waterloochurch.org, or send an E-mail to bjcn@ptd.net)

DINGMANS FERRY, Pa.

The Dingmans Ferry United Methodist Church, Myck Road, has Palm Sunday services at 9 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday school at 10:30 a.m. Holy Thursday and Good Friday services at 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday at 9 and 10:30 a.m. (Pastor Juel Murawski, 570-828-2288)

FRANKFORD

Emmanuel Christian Fellowship meets at 10 a.m. Sunday at the administration building of the Sussex County Fairgrounds, 37 Plains Road, Augusta. (Rev. James Cagle, pastor; 973-579-9036; e-mail office: office@ecfnj.org, or visit www.ecfnj.org).

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The Frankford Plains United Methodist Church, 99 Plains Road, Augusta, has worship at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday in the handicapped accessible sanctuary, with Sunday school after the Junior Sermon. Communion the first Sunday of the month. Good Friday service at 7 p.m. Easter sunrise service at 6:15 a.m., followed by breakfast and an Easter worship service at 10:30 a.m. (Rev. Robyne M. Mayer, 973-702-0334 or www.frankfordumc.org)

FRANKLIN

Christian Faith Fellowship Church, 3188 Route 94, Franklin, has worship services on Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m. A Good Friday service will be held at 7 p.m. Easter services will be Saturday, April 7, at 7 p.m. and Easter Sunday at 8, 9:15 and 11 a.m. (973-209-7786)

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The First Presbyterian Church of Franklin, 11-13 Main St., worships on Palm Sunday with family worship at 8:30 a.m. with a Palm Sunday "parade" and at 11 a.m. with a traditional service with special music by the choir. Holy Communion at both services. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. Call for information. (Rev. Rhonda Myers, 973-827-6444)

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Lakeland Baptist Church, Route 517 (Munsonhurst Road), has Sunday worship at 11 a.m. and evening service at 6. A Biblical presentation of the Passover, explaining Jesus last supper and Jewish tradition, will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m., with audience participation. New youth group for ages 11 to 18 meets Thursdays from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the church; pizza dinner included. (Pastor Bruce S. Wagner, 973-827-4524)

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Living Hope Fellowship meets at the Franklin Elementary School auditorium Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Cell groups are held during the week. Meetings also on Sunday afternoons; call for times. (Dave Reynolds, pastor; 973-827-0608.)

Temple Shalom of Sussex County

Oak Street off Route 631, holds Shabbat services Friday at 7:30 p.m. Shabbat school available. Rabbi Gerald Catano leads services. (973-827-5655 or www.templeshalomofsussex.org)

FREDON

The Yellow Frame Presbyterian Church, offers a brief Communion service at 8:30 a.m. and a traditional service at 10 a.m., with the Sunday school for children through grade 12 commensurate with the service. Maundy Thursday communion service at 7:30 p.m. Easter Sunday sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. and worship service at 10 a.m. The church is located at One Yellow Frame Road, seven miles south of Newton on Route 94. (Rev. Michael Nelms, 973-383-5364 or www.yellowframe.org)

GREEN

Tranquility United Methodist Church worships Sunday with a family service at 11 a.m. Sunday school for children at 9:45 a.m. (908-852-0218)

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Western Hills Christian Church at 40 Kennedy Road, Tranquility, has its worship service at 10:30 a.m. Sunday. Bible classes at 9:30 a.m. for all ages. Senior youth group meets Sunday at 6:30 p.m. (Pastor Ken Taylor, 908-850-8081 or e-mail whccn@verizon.net; Web site www.westernhillsnj.org).

HACKETTSTOWN

The Church of the Covenant, 319 Blau Road, is an Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. Worship service at 10:40. (Pastor Ron Pearce, 908-850-8910)

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The Elevation of the Holy Cross Eastern Orthodox Church, 909 Route 517, worships with Saturday evening Vesper services at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Divine Liturgy Service is at 10 a.m. (908-852-5611 or 908-637-6882)

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Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 409 E. Baldwin St., worships on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:15. Friday Matins service at 9:15 a.m. (Rev. Roland Feickert, pastor; 908-852-2156)

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The Hackettstown Baptist Church, 916 Route 517, meets for worship on Sundays at 10:45 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30. Wednesday prayer meeting at 7 p.m. at the parsonage. (Pastor Alan Parker, 908-852-6577)

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Skylands Unitarian Universalist Fellowship meets Sunday at 10:15 a.m. at 229 Main St. (Rev. Julie Newhall, 908-684-4040)

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St. James Episcopal Church, 214 Washington St., has services at 8 and 10 a.m. on Palm Sunday. The Passion of Christ will be brought to life in an outdoor procession (weather permitting) at 10 a.m. Breakfast is served at 9 a.m. Wednesday: Tenebrae service of shadows at 7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday: Holy Eucharist with washing of the feet at 7:30 p.m. Good Friday: Liturgy of prayer; song and reading of the Passion of Christ in an ecumenical service at noon; Stations of the Cross at 7:30 p.m. Holy Saturday, April 7: Prayers at noon in the chapel. Great Vigil of Easter (April 7), 7:30 p.m. Easter Sunday; Festival Resurrection of Christ, 8 and 10 a.m. with Communion.

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Trinity United Methodist Church, 213 Main St., meets on Sunday for worship at 8:15 a.m. (chapel), contemporary service at 9:15 a.m. and traditional worship at 10:45 a.m. Holy Communion at 9:15 and 10:45. Maundy Thursday worship with Communion at 7:30 p.m. Good Friday Walk gathering at 6 p.m., returns in time for 7:30 p.m. service with dramatic portrayal of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross. (Rev. Dr. Frank L. Fowler III, senior pastor; 908-852-3020 or visit www.trinityumc-hackettstown.org)

HAMBURG

Crossroads Assembly of God, 12 Edsall St., worships Sunday at 10 a.m. Children's church and Sunday school provided. The evening service is from 6 to 7:15 p.m. (Pastor Neil Chadwick, 973-827-9771)

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The First Presbyterian Church of Hamburg, at the corner of Route 23 and Oak Street, worships Sunday at 10 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:15 a.m. (Rev. David Wells, 973-827-9786)

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Grace Fellowship is meeting temporarily at 36 Heritage Lane, Condo Bldg. D, Hamburg. Bible Discovery for all ages at 9:15 a.m.; worship celebration service studying Revelation, with kids church, at 10:30. (Jim Westervelt, pastor; 973-827-7780; Web site: www.LovingGrace.net)

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Hamburg Baptist Church, Route 23 South, worships on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Sunday school at 9:15 for all ages. Communion services the first Sunday of the month. (Pastor Alan Gardiner, 973-827-7188; church office, 973-827-7225)

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Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3320 Route 94, celebrates Holy Communion services every Sunday at 9 a.m. Sunday school begins at 10:30 for all ages. (Pastor Stephen Vogt, 973-827-5080)

HAMPTON

The Baleville Congregational Christian Church, 6 Church Road, worships on Sunday at 11 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30. (Rev. Dan Arnold, pastor; 973-383-4743)

HARDYSTON

The Stockholm United Methodist Church, Route 515 across from the municipal building, meets for worship and Holy Communion on Sunday at 8 and 9:30 a.m. Sunday School at 9:30. (Pastor Ed Casey, 973-697-6202)

HOPATCONG

Full Life Assembly of God meets at 7 Brooklyn-Stanhope Road, for Sunday morning worship and Super Church for children at 10:30 a.m. At 6 p.m., Prayer and Healing services are held. Classes and programs for all ages. (973-398-1400)

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St. Jude's R.C. Church, 40 Maxim Drive, has Masses at 5 p.m. on Saturday and at 7:45, 9 and 11 a.m. on Sunday. (Father George Gothie, 973-398-6377)

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West Side United Methodist Church, 16 Maxim Drive, has worship and church school on Sunday at 10 a.m. (Church office, 973-398-0846)

JEFFERSON

The First Presbyterian Church of Berkshire Valley, 635 Berkshire Valley Road, worships Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Sunday school classes and adult study start at 11 a.m. (Rev. David T. Widmer, pastor; 973-366-8440 or visit www.berkshirevalleychurch.org)

JOHNSONBURG

The Johnsonburg United Methodist Church, on Main Street (Route 661), worships Sunday at 9 a.m. Communion the first Sunday of each month. (908-852-0218)

LAFAYETTE

The Bodhi Monastery, 67 Lawrence Road, has a variety of Buddhist Devotional Services, study courses, liturgies and Dharma talks scheduled during the week, in two groups, English and Chinese. A vegetarian lunch is shared at 11:15 a.m. every Saturday. Sunday meditation at 9:30 a.m. is guided by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi. Group meditation throughout the week; call for schedule. (973-940-0473; e-mail info@bodhimonastery.net)

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The Lafayette Federated Church, 180 Route 15, worships on Sunday at 8:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday school for all ages at 9:40 a.m. The evening fellowship hour is held at 6 p.m. There is an

adult prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. The church is handicapped accessible. (Rev. Richard Cryder, pastor; 973-383-4461)

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The Reformed Baptist Church of Lafayette, 28 Meadows Road, has services Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. with Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. (Church office, 973-579-3067)

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Lafayette 7th Day Adventist Church, 25 Randazzo Road (Route 648) between Sunset Inn and Limestone roads, worships on Saturday starting at 9:45 a.m. with Sabbath School for adults and children, and worship service at 11 a.m. followed by fellowship luncheon. (Pastor Abner Ramos at 908-684-1045 or leave a message at 973-383-4555)

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Unity Church of Sussex County, 25 Mudcut Road, has Sunday Celebration and Youth Ministry at 11 a.m. (Janice Billera, Spiritual Leader. Church office, 973-383-6277)

MILFORD, Pa.

The Church of the Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist (Episcopal), Fifth and Catharine streets, worships on Palm Sunday at 8 and 10 a.m. with Holy Eucharist. Church school during the 10 a.m. service. The Ecumenical Food Pantry is open on Friday from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at 7:30 p.m.; Holy Saturday, April 7, Easter Vigil service at 7:30 p.m.; Easter Sunday services at 8 and 10 a.m. (570-296-8123)

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Tri State Lutheran Fellowship, a mission of Redeemer Lutheran Church (LCMS) of Andover Twp., has church school and adult classes at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday at the Sunshine Station Early Learning Center, Routes 209 and 6 opposite Lühr's Hardware. Worship service at 10:15. (Deacon John Babbitt, 973-293-3009)

MONTAGUE

Minisink Reformed Church, 346 Old Mine-River Road, worships and has Sunday school at 10 a.m. Ramp and chair lift for disabled. (Rev. Angelo J. Forleo, 973-293-3514 or 973-293-3596.

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St. James the Greater Roman Catholic Community, 75 River Road, has Masses on Sunday at 8 and 11 a.m. and on Tuesday and Saturday at 8 a.m. (Father Richard Carton, pastor; Rectory and office: 973-948-2296; office, 210 Route 206, Layton.)

MOUNT ARLINGTON

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 50 Edgemere Ave., across from the Borough Hall, has Holy Eucharist at 8 and 10 a.m. on Sunday, with the laying on of hands for healing the first Sunday of each month. Church school at 9:45. (Rev. Kim F. Capwell, rector; 973-398-1890; e-mail kfc1@optonline.net)

NEWTON

Christ Episcopal Church, Church and Main streets, celebrates Holy Eucharist at 8 and 10:15 a.m. on Sundays. Education hour begins at 9 a.m. (Rev. Robert Griner, rector; 973-383-2245; e-mail christchurch@tellurionet.net, or visit www.christchurchnewton.org)

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The Church of Living Faith, a non-denominational church at 42 Yates Ave., has Sunday service at 10:45 a.m. with children's church after worship. (Pastor Dan Zemanek, 973-615-5727).

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The First Baptist Church, 110 Main St., has worship on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday school is at 9:45 a.m. Children's church is provided. The next Food Pantry and Clothes Closet will be April 23. White Horsemen Riding Club starts Monday. (Pastor R. Scott Boger,