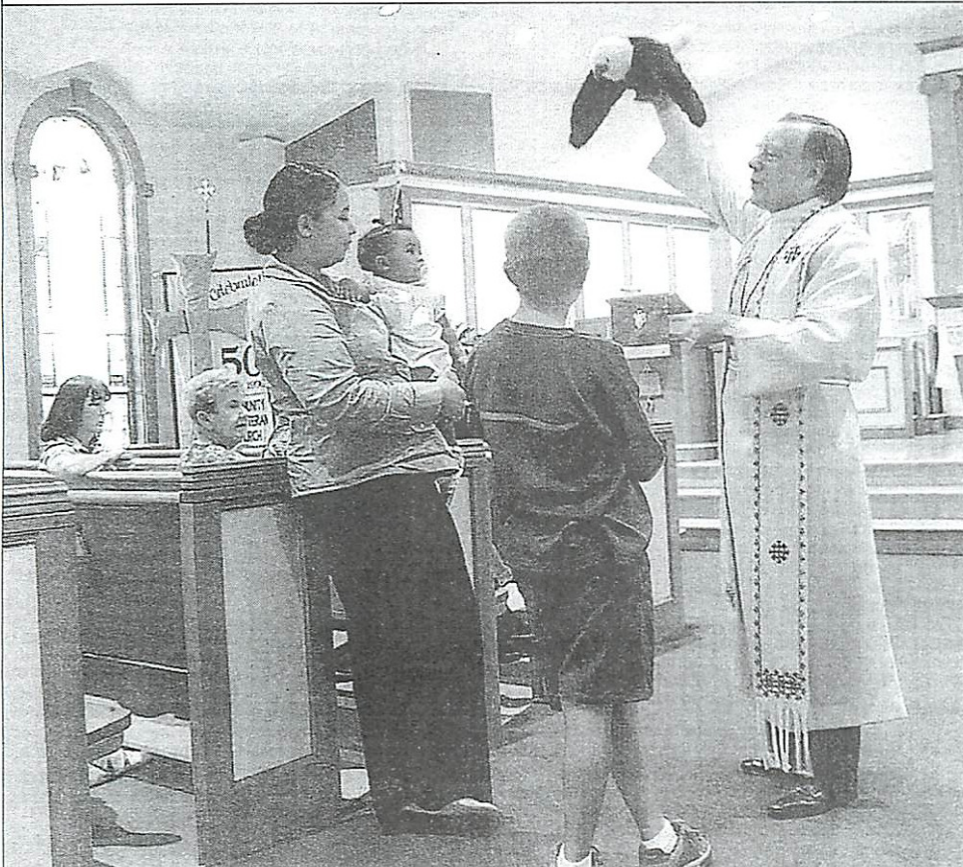


Faith in the City



The Rev. John Underwood (r.) at Sunday services at the Community Presbyterian Church. Photo by Frank Koester

A place of friendship

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DEER PARK

Name of congregation: Community Presbyterian Church of Deer Park

Address and neighborhood: 1843 Route 231, Deer Park, L.I.

Years in existence: 62

Pastor: The Rev. John Underwood

Scheduled services: Sunday, 10:15 a.m.

Size and character: The congregation's 230 members see the church as warm and welcoming — "a place of friendship," Underwood said. The congregation includes a "nice variety of people" hailing from places such as Scandinavia, Zimbabwe, Guyana and Jamaica.

What makes the church special: For the last five years, the flock has participated in a Presbyterian-run mission program in El Salvador, Underwood said. The mission provides medical assistance as well as educa-

tional scholarships and Bible schooling for children.

Most prized possession: "The fellowship of the people who worship here," Underwood said.

Most memorable services: In 1996, when the congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of the church's incorporation, Underwood said. Each year, the candlelit Christmas Eve service is always particularly special, he added.

Proudest moment: A decade ago, the congregation revolutionized its approach to ministry by establishing, in conjunction with other local congregations, a "community dinner," known as Shepherd's Table, Underwood said.

Biggest issue: "Rising costs and limited resources," Underwood said. "It's a challenge."

Leaders in song: Music director William Morgan leads the 15-member

traditional choir — and delights the congregation with his piano playing, Underwood said.

Longest-attending parishioner: Charter John Seib of Deer Park

Other programs: Sunday school meets at 10:15 a.m. and includes roughly 12 kids. The youth program, Christians Under the Stairs, is led by Tim Ferguson and derives its name from its weekly meeting place at the church. Among other activities, the group supports children in China and takes mission trips into New York City to help feed the homeless.

Compiled by John Lauinger

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