



The Rev. Owen Thompson, rector at Trinity-St. John's Episcopal Church, Hewlett: I can't help but look at the immigration debate

through the lens of biblical history. The scores of immigrants making their way across the desert in the hopes of reaching the "promised land" are resoundingly similar to the ancient Israelites' 40-year journey through the wilderness to a land promised by the God of Abraham. All they desired was a land to put down roots and establish a good life away from the bondage of Egypt. I suspect this is all that those wishing entry into the United States want today; a land on which they can build a prosperous life for themselves and their loved ones. As a nation with a rich religious history, one hopes that the goodness of God — which most, if not all, religions in the United States espouse — would embody that goodness of heart and spirit to open their arms (borders) to those seeking a new life with new possibilities.



Rabbi Noah Gradofsky, Temple Israel, Long Beach: The immigration debate implicates matters of national security, the American

legacy as a home to the down-trodden, and the pursuit of justice. These are issues that touch the heart of any person of faith, though such persons may reasonably disagree on the answer. Faith is a guide



PHOTO BY CHARLES ECKERT

that helps us understand, and inspires us to pursue, what is good and just. I always fear our faith can lead us to the unjust conclusion that we should force others to live by the conclusions of a faith they might not share. However, this fear shouldn't lead faith communities to forgo their religious obligation to champion what is good and just.



The Rev. Art Alexander, senior pastor at Valley Stream Church of the Nazarene and district superintendent of Metro New York District Church of the

Nazarene:

Today, the immigration issue not only has implications politically and economically, but also morally. Undocumented immigrants, while illegal, still are human beings, and as such in the Judeo-Christian belief, are created in the likeness of God. Every human being is of infinite value. Faith groups

should be involved not only in the dialogue with politicians and businesses, but also in helping these people in practical ways, which may include food, shelter and advocating justice. While all faith groups I've been associated with abide by the laws of our nation, and pray for the success of our democracy, they also feel a deep moral obligation for whom Jesus would have called "the least of these."



Tony Hileman, senior leader at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Manhattan:

Balancing ethical considerations with social customs and legislation is complex. It's even more challenging when weighing rights of others against those of national privilege. Selective enforcement of immigration regulations — granting immunity to "illegal employers" while holding employees hostage to

the law — has ceded the moral high ground to those who oppose this injustice. There are times when nonviolent protest and civil disobedience are required if we are to be true to our honest convictions. This is one of those times.



The Rev. Gilbert Martinez, pastor at St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church, Manhattan:

The church has been involved in immigration since Mary, Joseph and Jesus fled the persecution of Herod. There are a number of church documents — including papal encyclicals, letters and bishops' statements — encouraging the Catholic faithful to be involved in immigration. Some in faith communities are reflecting on offering sanctuary in churches to families in danger of deportation. While this is a serious step, sanctuary could be part

Immigrants facing deportation and separation from their American-born children attend a press conference last month announcing a new sanctuary movement at St. Paul the Apostle, a Roman Catholic church in Manhattan.



The Rev. Annemarie Noto of Baldwin, prayer task group coordinator for the Metropolitan New York Synod's Commission for Evangelical Outreach:

My parents came here from Germany. My mother's brother led the way for her. After establishing his bakery business and his marriage in 1923, he arranged for his sister to join him. This is an old tradition: immigrants establishing themselves in the new land and then encouraging loved ones from the old country to join them. The possibility that immigrants may no longer be able to send for loved ones is a sticky point in the Senate Immigration Reform Bill, released for public view on May 22. I'm not pleased the proposed legislation would rate education and work experience over family ties when deciding about immigrants who want family members to join them. Since 9/11, many persons view illegal immigrants as a threat. That is unfortunate. No one wants to see a potential terrorist gain free admittance, but as God-fearing people, we are asked to deal kindly with strangers.

Interviews by Michael R. Ebert

Send faith questions you'd like us to pose to: Genetta Adams, Newsday, 235 Pinelawn Rd., Melville, NY 11747-4250, or genetta.adams@newsday.com.

CALENDAR

TODAY

DAY OF REFLECTION

MOUNT SINAI: Healing day with Brother Clark Berge focusing on stress release and coping, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., The Little Portion Friary, 48 Old Post Rd., \$35, reserve, 631-473-0553.

TOMORROW

JEWISH CENTER OPEN HOUSE

EAST MEADOW: Visit this conservative synagogue, learn about adult education, Hebrew school, family services, nursery school, 10 a.m.-

noon, East Meadow Jewish Center, 1400 Prospect Ave., eastmeadowjwc.org, 516-483-4205.

TEMPLE OPEN HOUSE

HUNTINGTON: Tour of the facility, meet the clergy and learn about membership options, including the Young Family Membership and "Getting to Know You," 10 a.m.-noon, Temple Beth El, 660 Park Ave., tbeli.org, free, 631-421-5835.

THANK GOD FOR ISRAEL

WOODHAVEN: Israeli music, recognition of Israeli Army veterans, special service and prayer for Israel, 11 a.m., All Nations Baptist Church, 8676

80th St., free, 718-296-2025.

FREE CATHEDRAL TOUR

GARDEN CITY: Focus on cathedral's stained-glass windows and their medieval symbolism, 12:30-1:30 p.m., Cathedral of the Incarnation, 50 Cathedral Ave., meets in the vestibule, 516-832-8161.

CAREGIVERS' RETREAT DAY

MANHASSET: Includes prayer, a short presentation, quiet time, discussion and dinner, 2:30-6:30 p.m., St. Ignatius Retreat House, 251 Seeringtown Rd., \$40, reserve, 516-621-8300, ext. 10.

PRAISE SERVICE AND CELEBRATION

EAST NORTHPORT: Celebrate 50 years of ministry, 6 p.m., East Northport Christian Church, 130 Vernon Valley Rd., 631-757-7177.

THE WEEK AHEAD

THE LORD'S LUNCHEON

BALDWIN: Lecture, "Walking in the Power of the Spirit," 11:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Tuesday, Coral House, 70 Milburn Ave., reserve, \$18, babysitting available upon request, 516-826-3686.

SENIOR ADULT MITZVAH SOCIETY

MASSAPEQUA: Luncheon, musical entertainment, 55 and older, 12:30-3 p.m. Wednesday, Temple

Judea, 98 Jerusalem Ave., \$5, 516-783-7189.

TORAH STUDY: BOOK OF EXODUS

ROSLYN: Led by Rabbi Martin Cohen, 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Shelter Rock Jewish Center, Shelter Rock and Seeringtown roads, 516-741-4305, ext. 10.

CRAFTERS' SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

RONKONKOMA: For women crafters who quilt, knit, crochet, bead or scrapbook, two-day/overnight seminar explores the relationship between spirituality and crafting, starts with 4 p.m. dinner Friday, ends after 8 p.m. dinner Saturday, Cenacle Retreat House, 310 Cenacle Rd., \$100, including \$25 deposit, must reserve, 631-588-8366.

SHABBAT UNDER THE STARS

KINGS PARK: Night service on the lawn, 7 p.m. Friday, Kings Park Jewish Center, Route 25A, free, rain or shine, 631-269-1133.

'A SERVICE OF LOVING GRATITUDE'

GREAT NECK: A special Shabbat service honoring Jerome K. Davidson as he retires as senior rabbi and becomes rabbi emeritus; guest speaker is Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, a special oneg follows the service, 8-10:30 p.m. Friday at Temple Beth-El, 5 Old Mill Rd., free, 516-487-0900.



Choruses will blend their voices at the Gay Pride Service.