



Panther Valley Ecumenical Ministry

HAPPENINGS

New Minister for PVEM!!

April 2004

As you may already know, after our March 21 meeting, the congregation met and voted unanimously for the appointment of The Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Howson as the permanent pastor of PVEM.

The Rev. Dr. Mary Lou Howson (she prefers to be called Mary Lou) comes to us from Connecticut where she has served as a minister for over twenty years – fifteen of them at First Congregational Church in Danbury, CT. She and her husband Jim grew up near Valley Forge, PA. He was raised a Presbyterian and she an Episcopalian. Two of her great uncles were Methodist ministers. She treasures the riches our various denominations and traditions have to offer each other.

Mary Lou has a BA in history from Mount Holyoke College, a Master's in Teaching from Wesleyan University, and a Master's in Divinity from Yale Divinity School. Her Doctor in Ministry is from Columbia Theological Seminary (PSUSA) in Decatur, GA. The focus of her research was on the spiritual journey as interpreted by St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, two sixteenth century Spanish mystics.

In her first professional life Mary Lou taught high school social studies. She loves history. There will no doubt be occasional historical sermons. Teaching continues to be a central part of her call in ministry.

While in Danbury she was active in building

interfaith and ecumenical relationships. The most challenging and rewarding part of her work was founding an interfaith organization, The Meeting House, whose goal is to enable people to build bridges of learning, respect, and friendship across what have been divisions of faith and culture. In addition, she led the congregation in writing and presenting a resolution against Anti-Semitism to the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference. Passed unanimously at Annual meeting in 2000, it was then passed by the General Synod of the UCC in 2001. She looks forward to working with people who value what they can learn from each other and seek to build bridges of cooperation and understanding.

Her husband Jim is retiring this June after thirty-seven years of teaching middle school English. He plans to keep himself busy with umpiring baseball, re-enacting both the American Revolution and the Civil War and possibly substituting.



Their five-month-old grandson, Isaac, lives in Buffalo, NY, with his parents Davy and Rebecca Howson.

Rev. Howson will hopefully begin in July of this year. We look forward to her arrival.

Stewardship & Communication News



On Sunday, March 21, we participated in the annual One Great Hour of Sharing Campaign. OGHS is a multi-denominational campaign which began after WWII, a time of great need throughout the world. We currently made \$1,300! A great job!

For over fifty years, One Great Hour of Sharing has supported worthy relief and development efforts, both in

the United States and abroad: from Bound Brook, NJ, to far off countries in Africa and Asia. Some of the stated goals of OGHS include helping people to:

- Feed and support themselves
- Learn new skills and trades
- Obtain better health care
- Find a safe refuge to

start their lives

- Survive and work toward a better life.

As a congregation, we should feel proud of our efforts to assist those in need of a helping hand. Our donations have surely made a real difference in the lives of many people. Thank you for giving so generously to OHGS.

PARISH NURSING UPDATE

• April 10th 10:00 AM—Parish Nurses meeting at Paneras in Mansfield
 • April 11th 6:30 AM—Sunrise Service followed by breakfast
 10:00 AM—Easter Worship Service
 • April 18th 11:00 AM—Blood Pressure Screening in the Church office
 • April 23rd & April 24th—Semi-Annual Rummage Sale. All Parish Nurses are needed to provide a minimum of one hour of assistance
 • April 25th Annual Blood Drive. Call to schedule your appointment and invite church and community members to participate.
 • April 28th & April 29th—AARP Safe Driving Course taught by Don Kelly, and AARP volunteer who teaches the class with a user friendly style and skill

PVEM Parish Nurses will co-host the upcoming Northern NJ Parish Nurse Network Meeting at PVEM on Saturday, May 15th. We were selected as a host site due to the proactive congregational and community programs offered by our PVEM Nurse program.

PVEM Parish Nurses will host an international guest lecturer, Dr. Steven Meier, MD, Diplomate of the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery from Overlook Hospital's The Center for Advanced Sports Medicine, Knee and Shoulder. Mark your calendar for June when Dr. Meier's presentation will address the steps you need to follow to prevent injury to your knees as related to osteoarthritis and the appropriate cutting edge treatments for this.

YOUTH GROUP MISSION TRIP UPDATE

As you already know, the kids are working hard to raise money for this work-camp in July 2004!

Our hoagie sale was a great success and we plan to have another one in May. This time we may even include Chef Salads, so keep an eye out for the date. Thank you for your support.

Our "Serge Concert" on March 6, was not as successful. However, the music was awesome and all who attended (there were only about 35 of us) had a great time. The music was loud and a lot of fun.



Our next event will be the Spaghetti Dinner on May 2, before the Bruce Davies Concert. Tickets will be

\$8 for adults and \$4 for children under 6. Dinner will include: Spaghetti, meatballs, bread, salad and dessert! What a great deal!

Come support the youth, have a great dinner, and you can even enjoy a Scottish Concert after dinner. Tickets for the concert will be separate. They are \$12 per ticket.

Whether you come just to eat or come to eat and go to the concert, you will be glad you did!

Please keep an eye on the bulletin board at the top of the stairs; the chart will tell how much the youth group has made and how much they still need!

Starting this Sunday, there will be a giant tool box in the Narthex. We are look-

ing for donations of tools to bring with us to work camp. These are the items that are needed: screwdrivers, paint brushes, rollers, hammers, masking tape, drop cloths, nail aprons, paint trays and buckets, rags, spray bottles, safety goggles, work gloves, tool pouches and masks.

These are some of the things that are needed. If you have any extra laying around, please bring them in. We would prefer donations as opposed to having to return tools. This will make it easier on us.



If you have any questions, please contact the Church office or you can speak to, Amy T., Lynn J., Marilyn S., or John P. Jr. Thank you.

Thank you

This is a letter that Christian Outreach received from a family they helped at Christmas time from Carmen Ministries:

Dear PVEM:

I would like to thank the ministry for all the wonderful gifts that were donated to

my family for Christmas. The joy and love sent with those gifts was such a blessing! The bliss that my family and I enjoyed on Christmas was splendid.

There are not enough thanks in the world to send your ministry. You have

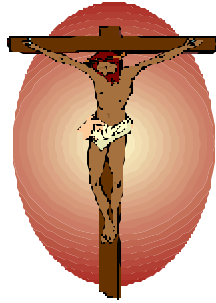
brought joy to my family and to me. Your ministry represents the decent generosity that still exists in America today. God Bless you all!

Antonio Rodriguez & Family

Pastor's Page— "The Hope of Resurrection"

John Macquarrie was one of the most influential of my teachers at Union Theological Seminary. He now teaches at Oxford and has recently written Christian Hope. He speaks of hope as "the dynamic of action" which makes us dissatisfied with the evils of this world and which motivates us to work for greater morality and justice in society. He says that 'Christ has opened a new hope for the human race.'

Macquarrie, in his usual insightful way, says that 'Christian hope is a total hope, and it touches on all aspects of human life, both individual and social. As a total hope, it is a hope not limited or nullified by death. Indeed. . . I would have no hesitation in calling it a 'supernatural' hope, in the sense that it looks for possibilities beyond those which we know in our everyday 'natural' existence.'



This is the hope of the Resurrection for each and every day of life. God opens to us new life, new hope and new love in Jesus of Nazareth. Of course, the journey to this hope of the Resurrection lies through the valley of the shadow of death, the human Jesus who suffered and died—the Cross and Good Friday.

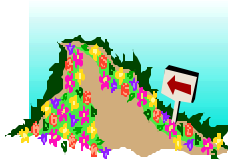
It was on the Cross where God became one with suffering humanity. Macquarrie says, "it was precisely Jesus' passion on the Cross which opened the new and deeper understanding of God as one who stands with all humanity amid the sins and sufferings of the world, and is not therefore a distant celestial monarch untouched by the travail of creation. This in itself is the ground of our hope."

Peace,

Harry

PVEM MEMORIAL GARDEN

Do you want to pay for the high cost of a cemetery plot and memorial stone? Do you want to pay for the high cost of a casket? Do you want families and friends to spend a lot of money for floral bouquets that are going to die off in a few days-how much nicer to be remembered with a flowering tree, a shrub or a perennial plant!



If your answers are "NO," think about planning for a cremation with your ashes placed in PVEM's future Memorial Garden—they can be scattered freely or placed in a biodegradable container with a map designating the location.

The idea of a Memorial Garden is becoming increasingly popular with all church denominations. Many church gardens in the northwest area of New Jersey have been visited, with helpful information from the pastors, and culminating a plethora of ideas. A committee has been formed and is still in the primary stages of planning. A landscape architect has been hired and a preliminary

plan executed. The plan calls for the entrance to begin at the front parking area and to follow the graduated hillock down to the present sidewalk off the door of Fellowship Hall. We are now waiting for a more detailed drawing of plant materials from three nurserymen. Committee members are eager to bring these ideas to fruition. In the near future we shall be conducting a fund-raiser. There will be many things for which we shall be needing donations, such as plant material, garden benches, an arbor, and varieties of stonework, etc. We are planning to have attractive plaques with names and dates of the interred.

This is an exciting time for the church and its members. If you have any questions about any aspect of this garden, please call Jeanne Bateman.

P.S. A new paperback has been donated to our Library—its title "The American Way of Death Revisited" by well-known author Jessica Mitford. To quote the NY Times, "Brilliant, a must read for anyone planning a funeral in their lifetime; witty and penetrating it speaks the truth!"

Award-winning singer/songwriter to perform!

On Sunday, May 2 at 7 p.m., PVEM will be presenting Bruce Davies, an award-winning singer/songwriter from Scotland!

Bruce's rich voice and tasteful acoustic guitar style, coupled with a repertoire which is as diverse as the land that he hails from, has won him friends on three continents. Not only is he a faithful interpreter of the music of Scotland but also an award-winning songwriter. His search for special songs written by others, which he can take to new audiences, is unceasing. He sings songs that have moved him and passionately wants to share them with audiences and to move them too, whether to laughter or tears.



guards his two concerts at the United Nations, NY, as particularly special to him.

Bruce has never appeared in Hackettstown before but he has made many friends in the area, thanks to his concerts in Sparta and the surrounding district. This will be his only public appearance in Northern New Jersey this year.

After several albums featuring his own songs and those of friends and heroes, his most recent CD "Songs We Used to Sing", pays homage to his Scottish roots. You will hear songs from all six of his currently available CDs and maybe some surprises for his first visit to PVEM!

Tickets are \$12 per person.

IN ADDITION TO THE CONCERT...

He lives in Glenrothes, Fife, around 26 miles from St. Andres, (the home of golf), and performs over 150 appearances annually. He is delighted to be appearing here at PVEM.

Of the many highlights of his career, he re-

COME TO THE YOUTH GROUP SPAGHETTI DINNER

The Youth Group will be sponsoring a SPAGHETTI DINNER beginning at 5 p.m. before the concert. Tickets will be \$8 per adult and \$4 for kids under 6. Dinner will include Spaghetti & meatballs, salad, bread and a dessert. What more could you want?!

July! Come and have a great dinner and go to the concert or just come to the dinner, either way you will be glad you did!



All money raised from the spaghetti dinner will go to the Youth Group Mission Trip in

If you have any questions, please contact the church office!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

PLEASE NOTE OUR EMAIL ADDRESSES HAVE CHANGED:

The church's email is now info@pvem.net

Amy's email is now atesta@pvem.net and

Our new Web site Address is : <http://www.pvem.net/>

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US Postage
PAID
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PERMIT NO. 11
DATED MATERIAL



We're on the Web!
<http://www.pvem.net/>

LOCKS TO BE CHANGED!!!!

We will be changing the locks on all doors here at PVEM effective April 12. If you have a key, please contact the church office and make arrangements to receive a new one. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. Thank you!

