



Auction Countdown

Only seven weeks until the Auction. Time to place an ad in the program, sell tickets to your friends, and contribute an item/service to be auctioned off.



Check online at www.pvem.net to see what has been donated to date, and then create a unique offering for our Auction program. To date we have only one service being offered, and only one offering of baked goods. These have been “big sellers” at other area auctions.

Can anyone provide music lessons of any type? Can you tutor someone? What about helping someone with their computer skills?

Booster ads for the program will list your name for a \$10.00 contribution or your business card for \$12.50. Complete the form during coffee hour at the “Auction Table” or online at our church website.

Remember the funds we raise will go to good use underwriting our church programs and the mission projects we support.

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Wanda Maltese honors Charlie Ort for 50 years service and membership in Girl Scouts.

Girl Scout Sunday March 12

Wanda Maltese, Assistant Service Unit Manager for the Buck Hill Valley Service Unit of the Girl Scouts of the USA, and PVEC congregation member, honored Charlie Ort for 50 years of membership in the Girl Scouts. The bridge that Charlie built for the “bridging ceremony”, when his wife was a Leader, is still being used today. The “bridging ceremony” is conducted when girls from one age group program “bridge” to the next age group program.

Girl Scouts, their Leaders, and parents joined the congregation in worship on Sunday and then were honored during coffee hour with a cake celebrating the 94th Birthday of the Girl Scout organization.

Currently one Brownie troop, two Junior troops and one Cadette troop meet in our church. There are a total of seven troops in Allamuchy and 32 troops in the Buck Hill Valley Service Unit.

Spring Rummage Sale.

Now is the time to collect your more than once used items to donate to this established project. Mark your calendar for Friday, April 28th, 9 AM - 2 PM and evening hours of 5 PM to 7 PM. Saturday, April 29th, 9 AM - 12 noon/Bag Day \$3 a bag.

The times and dates for dropping off your items will be April 24th & April 25th 9 AM - 2 PM and 6 PM - 8 PM., the last drop-off date is April 26th 9 AM - 12 PM.

Only acceptable items are clothing, Children's books only, shoes, purses, children's furniture, toys, small working appliances, sports equipment and small household items.

Absolutely no computers or typewriters or books, bed frames, mattresses, tires, curtain rods, bowling balls, potty chairs, car seats, car racks, workout equipment, knives, and large furniture will be accepted.

Information on the rummage sale can be obtained by contacting Amy Testa at the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church office at 908-852-5444 or visit us online at www.pvem.net.

Wanted: kitchen cabinets complete with counter tops for our Church School classrooms for storage and work space. If you're remodeling your kitchen, keep us in mind.

The Home Stretch

This is the last month for our "confirmands". On April 30th we will celebrate their Confirmation and welcome them into church membership.

On October 16, 2005 we, the congregation, pledged to support them in their projects and provide encouragement in their Christian service. As they become full fledged members of the church we need to pledge anew our support of these very special young people:

**Robert Blake
Patrick Brusia
Celeste DeMark
Katie Robinson
Ashley Testa
Patrick Wilson
James Zinckgraf
Brian Zinn**

Plan to join the celebration of Confirmation on April 30th and welcome these new members.



Please Honor the Happenings Deadline

Please submit all articles by the 15th of the month for timely publication. It takes time to build the newsletter; however, if for some reason you don't have the information for the article that you know you will need space for, just let us know so we can reserve the space. We realize that sometimes events create the need for a last minute addition, so we will try to be understanding. Otherwise, any late submissions will be in the following issue. Thank you

Commission News

Christian Education

There is a program in place through June and there will be a Vacation Bible School held in the evenings of July 19, 20 and 21. There will be a program for children and adults. The program theme will be "Life in Jesus' Time". A light supper will be served at 6:30 pm and the classes will begin at 7:00 pm.

Christian Outreach

The Christian Outreach Commission had a fair on Girl Scout Sunday and did well. The Spring Fair continues today, April 2, during coffee hour in Fellowship Hall. They are making plans with Carmen Ministries to schedule for Spring and Summer Activities.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care will be collecting emergency notification information from everyone so that there will be a secondary source for notifying relatives, etc..

Stewardship & Communication

The Commission wishes to thank the congregation for their participation in One Great Hour of Sharing.

Worship

The Tuesday morning and evening Bible Studies and evening prayer session have been a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth during this Lenten Season and there has been a request from the participants that they continue so stay tuned for the new schedule.

There are a series of worship opportunities available for Holy Week. The Palm Sunday Service this year will offer some insight into what Jesus experienced during the last week of his life on earth. The Maundy Thursday Service will help us understand what transpired at "the last supper". We can join the rest of the community at the Good Friday Service at St. James in Hackettstown. On Easter Sunday we will again conduct two services: the Sunrise Service at 6:00am followed by a hot breakfast in Fellowship Hall and the regular Worship service at 10:00am.



You may notice some changes if you look at the Council listing in the bulletin. As you know the by-laws mandate that "no officer, except the treasurer, may succeed himself or herself." In January when we did not have a new chairperson, Glenn Stevenson agreed to extend his term until we could find a new chairperson.

At their March meeting, the Council elected Evelyn Self as Chairperson and Sylvester Fletcher as Vice Chairperson. We are deeply grateful to Glenn for his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. We thank Evelyn and Fletch for the time, skills and energy which they are so generously offering to lead us to the next step of the way.

Bible Land Travel

Would you like to cruise the Mediterranean with a group of Christian Friends? Now is your opportunity. In March 2007, Dr. Frank Fowler and Rev. Matt Torgersen of Trinity United Methodist Church will lead a unique ten-day Bible Land travel experience. The journey will follow in the footsteps of the apostle Paul, the author of much of the New Testament. The ports that will be visited are in Italy, Greece and Turkey. The company offering the tour is Educational Opportunities, Tours. If you are interested, please contact Helen Guelich at 908-852-0923 for a brochure and additional information.

Blood Drive

We ended up with 22 people who wanted to donate and they were able to obtain 12 good pints. They were so nice and gracious people and are willing to come back next year. Thank you so much it wouldn't have happened without you all. An especially big thank you to John and Lynn Jurena for getting the ball rolling Sunday morning and promoting the program so much. It really is for a good cause and I do love doing them. Next year I'll be more on my toes!!!!

Thanks again and thank you for your prayers.

Hugs
Carol

Task Force Report:

Last October in a congregational meeting, we decided to establish three taskforces to study the results of the Congregational Survey that we had completed in the spring of 2004:

Name Change, Internal Communications, and Community Relations.

The Name Change Taskforce reported back to us in January and we voted at our Annual Meeting in January to change the last word of our name from Ministry to Church and to change our address from Hackettstown to Allamuchy.

The Internal Communications Taskforce and the Community Relations Taskforce reported their final results to Council this month. On Saturday, April 1 the Council will be on retreat with members of the taskforces and chairs of commissions to study, review, and decide how to respond to their recommendations. They will also be scheduling a meeting with the congregation in order to report back to you and ask you to take any action that might be appropriate.

We wish to thank the taskforce members for the time, energy, insight, and commitment they have shared with us. They have started us on our journey into the future.

Taskforce Facilitator: Betty Schultheis

Name Change

Arlene Bailey,
Mary Lightfoot
Ralph Minervino
Dot Schiller

Internal Communications

Lisa Blake
Eloise Mial
Tom Roberts
Charlie Schaffer

Community Relations

John Jurena
Wanda Maltese
Ron Reece
Cate Roberts
Evelyn Self

Financial Update

Your giving statement for the First Quarter 2006 is included in this issue of Happenings. Your efforts to remain current with your pledge are appreciated. Financially, we have not had a good start to 2006 with expenses exceeding income by almost \$8500 during the first two months.

Pledges/ Contributions	Thru 2/06	Budget YTD	Short Fall
Recieved	\$26,208.00	\$30,620.00	\$4412.00
Total Income	28,369.99	34,140.68	5770.69
Total Expenses	36,854.89	35,159.13	
Deficit	\$ 8,484.90		

If you have any questions please see me.

Rick Wilson

Meet the Congregation

Dave and Amy Testa have been members of the church since 1997, nine years. They have lived in Green Township since 1996, moving here from Montclair where Dave still works as a Fireman.



As you all know Amy is the church secretary, but you may not be aware that she has been very active with Christian Education. She has taught Church School, served as Church School Superintendent, and is currently a part of the Church School Leadership Team. She is also a past member of the Church Growth and Fellowship Commission. Amy's favorite thing about our church is "the people".

Dave is a talented woodworker. He made the bookshelves in the church library, the manger for the crèche, and the wooden cross we use in our Ash Wednesday Service.

Jeff Testa, a high school junior, is a member of the Building and Grounds Commission where his muscle power is in high demand. Ashley, a high school freshman, is a member of this year's confirmation class. David, a sixth grader, and the youngest member of the Testa family is known for his enthusiasm and big smile.

Easter Joy

*The day dawned dark and wet
A heavy fog the weather did deploy.
I wanted to snuggle 'neath the covers and yet
within my heart was the need for joy.
My youngest son had spent the night, so I
quickly rose to wake him.
He, like I, was sleeping soundly and I
had to roughly shake him.*

*We quickly showered and dressed and
as we sat drinking coffee at the kitchen table,
We saw the purple hyacinths and yellow daffodils
buffeted by the raging wind, yet somehow able
to look beautiful, the signs of spring and symbols
of His wonderful creation and the hope expressed
this Easter morning.*

*It is only a short ride to our church and as we rode
through the rain we spoke of our expectations
for this morning's service...we were not
disappointed.*

*The choir sang as angels blessed by God, the
sanctuary
was banked with tulips and lilies (with a heavenly
scent)
and our minister spoke as one by God anointed.*

*The service was laced with opportunities
for congregational interaction.
We sang, prayed, and passed the peace
bringing total satisfaction.*

*Love surrounded us and for a little while
we knew what it was to feel our Lord smile.
And we felt it together, this joy
I and my 24 year old boy.*

© Betty Schultheis 4/23/00



FROM THE PASTOR

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church currently stands on a threshold: we can either return to where we have been or go forward into a new future. The decisions that we make in the next few months will shape the life of this congregation for years to come. Those of us in the morning Lenten study have had the privilege of meeting a member of the Marksboro Presbyterian Church which closed last October. She is a delightful and deeply faithful woman who has enriched us by her presence. Yet the experiences she has shared reminds us all that clinging to the past, even a rich and beloved past, can be dangerous.

As you will have read both in Happenings and in the bulletin, the taskforces that we established last October as a result of the Congregational Survey have reported back to Council. We have already changed the last word of our name from ministry to church in hopes of clarifying for the community who we are.

Now we are ready to take the next steps in our journey and examine how we can best structure ourselves to facilitate internal communication and the work of the church. When the by-laws were written they assumed a congregation of 300 members or more. Currently, our membership is about 150. Ten percent of our membership is required just to serve on Council. We need to make significant revisions in order to prevent people from falling prey to exhaustion as we try to “fill all our mandated slots.” Council will be focusing on this report and how we can best implement its recommendations on Saturday, April 1. It is an exciting and overwhelming time. But it is, I believe, the next step into a new future.

I believe that a restructuring is a necessary step to revitalizing the congregation and re-energizing us for ministry. I hope that you will all join us in this portion of the journey as we live into a new way of doing things.

This restructuring is, however, only one of the steps we need to take. We also need to address the needs of our church school and of our music

program. We know that in order to survive and grow we need to attract and keep adults who still have children at home. A congregation whose average age is over 65 is a congregation that does not have a long future ahead of it. We need to make our children a priority for all of us – not just for those of us whose children are young. We need to actively welcome children and youth, to show them that we value them and their contributions, and to create a loving and welcoming space for them within the life of the congregation. While the Christian Education Commission will be the group most directly responsible for addressing this ministry, it is one that all of us need to actively support and encourage.

The music program also needs more intentional nurture, support, and encouragement. With an average worship attendance under 70 we are probably the smallest group that has ever worshipped regularly in our sanctuary. We are all struggling with our acoustics and our singing. The issue definitely has a negative impact on worship. We will need to be thinking outside the box and trying some new ways of doing things in the next months. The Worship Commission has already taken a step. We will have an intern from Centenary College with us this spring who will be directing the choir. We will not pay for her time; rather she will earn college credits.

As we work together to strengthen these areas of our life together we will become strong enough to begin to actively seek new members and friends of the congregation. The community relations taskforce has already pointed us in the right direction and we will be able to pick up and build on their work. We will be looking for about three of you who have a heart for welcoming strangers and making them feel at home. If such a ministry touches your heart, please let me know.

Together we can move forward through a time of change which is by definition also a time of uncertainty, and instability. Together we can follow Christ into a new day full of hope and renewal.

Mary Lou

Upcoming Events

Sunday, June 18

Father's Day

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL will be in the evenings of July 19, 20 and 21. There will be a program for children and adults. The program theme will be "Life in Jesus' Time". A light supper will be served at 6:30 pm and the classes will begin at 7:00 pm.

The last night we will have a barbecue and evening prayer on the lawn

Sun., April 2	10:00 am	Family Communion
	11:30 am	Outreach Easter Fair
Tuesday, April 4	7:00 pm	Evening Prayer
	7:30 pm	Bible Study
Weds April 5	10:30 am	Bible Study
Sunday, April 9	10:00 am	PALM SUNDAY – special service

Thursday, April 13	7:30 pm	MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE OF TENEBRAE
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Good Friday, April 14	noon	A Walk Through Holy Week: program for Children and families, other churches invited
	Noon	Adult Service at St. James Episcopal Church

Sunday, April 16	EASTER SUNDAY	
	6:00 am	Sunrise Service And hot Breakfast
	10:00 am	Worship

Friday – Saturday, April 28 and 29 Rummage Sale

Sunday, April, 30 10:00 am CONFIRMATION

Sunday, May 14 Mother's Day

Saturday, May 20 CHURCH AUCTION

Sunday, June 4 11:00 Strawberry Festival Plant Sale

Sunday, June 11 10:00 YOUTH SUNDAY Picnic – either Sunday or Saturday, June 10

Your Kindness is Appreciated

I would like to thank everyone for their get well wishes and support following our auto accident. Your kindness is appreciated.

Irene Lobell



Coffee Hour

The Calendar for 2006:

- April Stewardship Comm.
- May Episcopal
- June Methodist
- July Choir
- August Pastoral Care Comm.
- Sept. Christian Outreach
- October Presbyterian
- Nov. United Church of Christ
- Dec. Growth & Fellowship

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