



Pictured above left to right front: Linda Trent, Kathy Zinckgraf, and Helen Guelich. Second row: Mary Davis and Barbara Hikel. Third row: Cylvia Ultz and Peggy Cihocki.

The photo above and the following article, is the first of a series of photos and articles to help everyone to get to know the Church Commissions and what they do.

## The Christian Outreach Commission

*By: Linda Trent*

The Christian Outreach Commission at PVEM, like most of the other commissions, is a very active and hard-working group. Many of the members have been working together for over twelve years. *Christian Outreach Commission cont. page 2*

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## THEY'RE BACK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

*By Amy Testa*

I'm sure you know by now that our youth group went on the first ever mission trip to New Hampshire. There were four adults and seven youth who went. They were: Amy Testa, Lynn Jurena, Marilyn Schaffer, John Pflugfelder, Jr., Elizabeth Pflugfelder, Ashley Testa, Ryan Schaars, James Blake, Jessica Randis, Jessilyn Yaeger & Celeste DeMark! What an incredible week we had.

We all arrived at camp with great anticipation and expectations. We had no idea what we were in for or what was expected from us. But we all soon stepped out of our "comfort zones" and got to work! There was so much to learn and so many great things to do, we all quickly learned that this would be an experience not soon forgotten.

We left Panther Valley Ecumenical Ministry as what we thought was your basic youth group, but we came back as a closer and more devoted Youth group. How did that happen?!

Within the next couple of weeks, the youth group will be making a presentation that will explain what they did, what they learned, friends they made etc. They have already been working hard to prepare this for the congregation and we hope that you all will be here to share with the youth group. They are so proud of the work they have done and the lessons they have learned!

As one of the adult leaders, I would like to say to our youth group that I am so proud

Our major projects include running the Lord's Pantry, providing Thanksgiving and Christmas assistance to local families, and supporting our local mission, Carmen Ministries.

The Lord's Pantry provides food for a week to local families who can not make it through the month without assistance. The Pantry is designed to help families in emergency situations, but many families have come to depend on our assistance on a regular basis. The congregation makes monetary and food donations that are vital to the success of this mission. Our "take a bag and shop for the Pantry" has been so helpful in keeping the pantry stocked. In 2003, we had 140 pantry calls. Another major project is the Christmas Angel program. With help from the congregation, approximately fifty local families receive gifts of toys and clothing specifically purchased for the children. Last Christmas, children from Camp Hope and Carmen Ministries were part of this mission project.

Carmen Ministries is a local mission that works with young men involved in the juvenile justice system. Our congregation supports this mission through donations of clothes, food, vehicles, Christmas gifts, Bibles, and

pizza parties at the facilities. The proceeds from this year's Strawberry Festival (\$1,000) went to James Grimes, a young man being helped by Carmen Ministries, for his college education.

Like most of the other commissions at PVEM, fundraising is needed to cover operating costs. The Strawberry Festival is a June tradition, with the funds raised going to a local family or individual in need. In 2003 we gave \$1,000 to the Cameron family.

We have an apple festival in September where homemade apple crisp is sold at coffee hour. Our major fundraiser is the Holiday Bazaar, which will be held November 14th this year. The Bazaar is filled with beautiful and affordable Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts and decor. Homemade linens and gifts are highlighted and homemade lunch will be available.

The commission hopes to see all of the congregation this year at the bazaar.

The Christian Outreach commission meets on the second Sunday of the month after church and we welcome anyone who would like to join us. ❖

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION

**On September 12th you are cordially invited to a family Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Youth Group. Pancakes will be served starting at 8:30 AM.**

**This is the time that we invite all parents to register their children for Sunday School. ALL Sunday School children must have a registration form completed. Why not have some pancakes while you are filling out the forms.**

**Please plan to attend. Not only will you be showing support for the Sunday School, but you will also be showing your support to the Youth Group! So please, join us and 'Follow the Light'. More information will follow, so keep your eye on the church bulletin and the next newsletter.**

### Please Honor the Happenings Deadline

Please submit all articles by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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



## Meet Our New Pastor

On July 4<sup>th</sup> the Reverend Doctor Mary Louise Howson was welcomed as the new Pastor of the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church. Reverend Howson comes from Connecticut where she served as a United Church of Christ minister for twenty years.

While serving at the First Congregational Church in Danbury, Ct., she was active in building interfaith and ecumenical relationships, a perfect match for the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church mission.

The Panther Valley Ecumenical Church held its first service in December, 1969 as an Ecumenical Ministry that included the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the Methodist Church. Today's church includes a fifth group called the Covenant Ecumenical Church which exists for members other than the four original groups.

The Reverend Doctor Howson received her undergraduate education from Mt. Holyoke College, a Master's in teaching from Wesleyan University, her Master's in Divinity from Yale Divinity School and her Doctor in Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.

Reverend Howson's husband, Jim, has just retired from teaching middle school English. His plans include umpiring baseball, and actively engaging in both American Revolution and Civil War reenactments.

Reverend Howson will now lead the covenant in their words "To welcome to our fellowship all people whatever their race, condition, ethnic origin, or religious denomination."

All are welcome to worship at 10:00AM each Sunday, nursery care is provided for your little ones.

of these kids. I have seen each and every one of them grow in spirit and it is quite impressive.

I would also like to thank the other youth leaders who went with us. John, Lynn & Marilyn, we could not have done it without your love and support and there were times we needed that love and support!!!! I would also like to thank, John & Kathy Pflugfelder, Jeff Testa, Dave Testa, Pat Schaars, Linda Yaeger, Kelly Randis, Cassie Randis, Lisa Blake, Luce DeMark, Bob & Jane Nichols, Colleen Newton and Greg & Gail Werner for all of their guidance, help and support. These were the people who were behind the scenes who we really counted on! Last but not least we would like to thank this congregation. Your support has meant a great deal to us and we thank you all!

Don't forget, we will be doing a presentation for the congregation. Date and time to be determined so watch your bulletin!!! Thank you all again. It is good to be back!

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## Youth Activities

Starting in August there will be a youth group meeting every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 7-9pm in the church fellowship hall. The meeting is open to all children grades 5 and up.

There will be an all youth group picnic at the Harmony Ridge Camp ground on Sunday August 29th. Admission is \$5.00 per person and everyone is asked to sign up to bring something.

### \*\*\*Late Breaking News\*\*\*

The youth presentation of their work retreat has been scheduled for September 26, 2004. Be there to continue to show the wonderful support which has already been demonstrated.



Mary Lou receives a very heart warming welcome from Casey Ward (l) and Carrie Wilcoxson (r)

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### ***Recruiting Singers***

The choir is taking a summer break, but it's time to begin thinking about gearing-up for fall. We need about six more voices to be able to sing quality music in harmony.

The choir practices on Sunday morning at 9:00 AM, before church, and at 11:30 AM, after coffee, until noon.

We especially need altos and basses. If you are interested, just come to the choirloft on September 5 at 9:00 AM to practice with us.

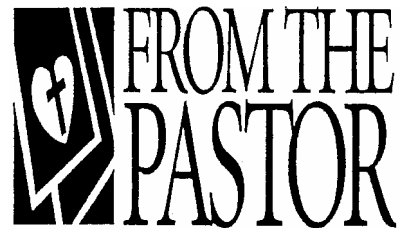
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### **Special Gifts**

*By Maxine Romig Volger*

The Memorial and Special Gifts Committee has recently received – tools for the Jr High mission to NH, acolyte stoles, furniture for the church library, two Christmas trees for the sanctuary, four outdoor canopies, and a wheel chair. We appreciate each of these gifts to PVEM.

Please, if you are considering a gift to the church, talk to any member of the Memorial



On July 2 when the moving van left all our belongings at our new Blairstown address, we began, to be quickly followed on July 4 when I preached my first sermon as your pastor. The last weeks have been a time of settling in during which you have welcomed me with great warmth. Your gracious good spirit has put both Jim and me at ease. I am looking forward to being among you.

Thomas Merton has written that creation is God's dance in emptiness. We are all invited to join the dance. From it we draw life; in it we come into relationship with each other and with God. As we now join this dance together, we will discover new steps and new harmonies. We might even learn a new dance or two from each other. At the same time, we will also practice old and beloved steps danced to treasured tunes. Each of us will have our own part to play in this dance of life in which we will continue to discover love and learn truth together. May it be for all of us a new chapter full of hope, compassion, and joy. May God's Spirit flourish among us, leading us onward in praise and thanksgiving.

Below is the information you need to reach me when the church office is not open.

Jim and Mary Lou Howson  
 11 Sunset Hill Rd.  
 Blairstown, NJ 07825  
 908-362-8867  
[mlhowson@earthlink.net](mailto:mlhowson@earthlink.net)

May the fruits of the spirit flourish abundantly in your life,

Mary Lou

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and Special Gifts Committee. This does not include cash gifts. Members to contact are Bob and Marion Barnes, Eloise Mial, Ella Yager and Maxine Romig Volger.

# Open Forum

## Communications

Frequently there are times that communications between groups within the church are not as good as they should be. Therefore, we need to have a place where all the groups can publish and discuss their activity schedules. If possible we would like to publish activities for the month that the Happenings is published.

If you know your groups schedule in time to post it in the Happenings, please send it to Amy or email it to [hppnings@mindspring.com](mailto:hppnings@mindspring.com) .

If you have a need to discuss something about the communications within the church – again you can submit an article to Amy or email to [hppnings@mindspring.com](mailto:hppnings@mindspring.com) .

All submissions must be signed to be published; however, we will, if you request it, withhold your name and list it as anonymous.

If however, an unsigned submission should happen to have a valid subject, we will consider it for publication.

## Letters to the Editor

Anyone in the church who would like to be heard can submit an article to the Happenings by turning it in to Amy or emailing it to [hppnings@mindspring.com](mailto:hppnings@mindspring.com) .

### What about the Commissions?

Do you feel that you have a talent to give but, you're not sure where you can give it? Look on the back of the weekly program and you will find the names of the chair people of all of the commissions. If you are still unsure – Any council member, Amy, or Rev. Howson would be willing to talk to you on an individual basis.

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“ Ask not what your country can do for you  
-- ask what you can do for your country.”

John F. Kennedy

Maybe we should substitute “Church” for country!!!

Do you have any ideas? Use this space to write them down. Then maybe you can bring it to a commission member or to a council member. Remember, the only stupid question, is the one you don't ask!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## SUPERMARKET GIFT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

This program was established in March 1998 to help the Church underwrite its Operating Budget. It is accomplished by the Church purchasing the Certificates from local supermarkets, A&P, Shoprite and Weis, at a discount. The Church through the Certificate Committee sells the certificates each Sunday from 9:30 am to 10:00 am and 11:00 am to 11:15 am. You can use them at the supermarket as you would use cash, checks or credit/debit card.

ShopRite certificates can also be purchased by you through the Committee who then gives to the Christian Outreach Committee so they can purchase food for the Lord's Pantry. Your purchase is then recorded as a contribution and reported on your giving statement.

If you have any questions about the Program, contact any of the following members of the Committee or stop by our table:

Millard Branch  
Dennis Dawley  
Elaine Dawley  
Don Guelich  
Helen Guelich

Irene LoBell  
Bob Lobell  
Ralph Mitchell  
Rick Wilson

The following is the financial summary of our sales and income:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>Church Income</b>
1998	\$55,805	\$2,790
1999	45,160	2,258
2000	46,345	2,317
2001	39,705	1,985
2002	47,269	2,363
2003	46,300	2,315
2004 (Y/T/D)	16,080	804

Millard Branch, Chairperson

# Warren County COAD

*By Ron Reece*

What's a COAD and what does it mean to us?

The Warren County COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) is the local chapter of the National VOAD, which was started to give a volunteer backup structure to the professionals who watch over us daily. These professionals are: the Office of Emergency Management, The County Health Department, the local hospitals, the various police departments, the Prosecutors office and several other organizations who will become active in the event of a disaster.

What does it mean to us? PVEM is a part of the volunteer backup and is very active in the organization.

Why are we a part of COAD? Our church is the host to the Northwest New Jersey Spiritual and Mental Health counseling group. We also have a group of professional nurses (Parish Nurses) active in our church as well as a very active food pantry which serves our community.

Who do we have that is involved? Gail Werner is the primary contact within the church and Dr. Ben and Jane Adams, of the Parish Nurses, are active members. Also, beginning in July of this year, I have taken the active role of co-chair of the Warren County chapter.

Anyone in the congregation who would like to take part in this activity is invited to attend the meetings. The group meets on a quarterly basis at the emergency communications building in Washington.

For more information contact Ron Reece (908)850-0179

## Parish Nurse Update

Gail Werner

August 15 Blood Pressure Screening after worship In the church office, Karen Ivins will perform the screening.

Sept. TBD Parish Nurse Meeting

Sept. 15&16 Trip to Washington, DC, 2days/1night sightseeing: Supreme Court, Library of Congress, National Archives, Capital Building, and tours of the National Cathedral, Jefferson, Lincoln and War Memorials including the new World War II Veterans Memorial, also a tour and performance of the Kennedy Center.

The price of \$189.00 is for double occupancy. Included in the price are all taxes, meal gratuities, baggage handling, one breakfast and one dinner. Please contact Washington Township Parks & Recreation Dept. for more information, (908) 876-5941.

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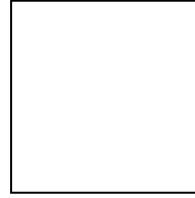
## Quotable

“Don't let your worries get the best of you, remember, Moses started out as a basket case.”

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## September Survey

by Betty Schultheis

As promised last month, this issue of *Happenings* will discuss the impact the survey will have on the fall stewardship campaign.

The results of the survey will be utilized by the Council to set goals for what programs and activities need to be funded by the 2005 budget. The church "commissions" will also utilize the information to determine their goals for 2005. The Council goals will be supported by the commission goals.

If we as a congregation are to see the church we each envision: offering the programs and activities we need for ourselves and our families, we must be willing to commit both financial resources and time/talent resources to the church.

The Stewardship Commission will be asking each congregation member to do just that: make a commitment for the sharing of time/talent with the church as well as a financial commitment.

The survey will be distributed during worship service on September 12, 2004. ❖



If you have an article that you would like to submit, please give it to Amy or, email it to [hppnings@mindspring.com](mailto:hppnings@mindspring.com)