



# The PVEC Happenings



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## Welcome Rev. Dr. Charles Sanders

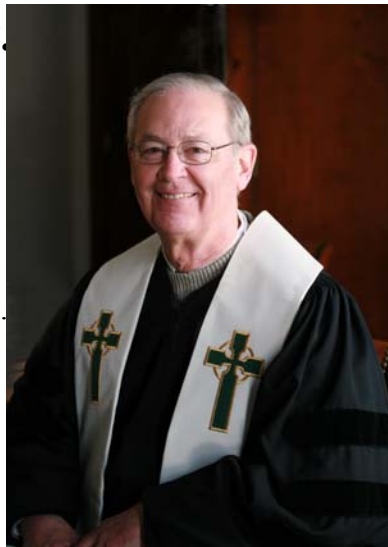


Photo by: Erika Croat

PVEC welcomed Rev. Dr. Charles (Chip) Sanders as he lead his first official worship for our church on Sunday

January 4th. Rev. Sanders has agreed to become our Interim Pastor until a permanent pastor is found.

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Sanders, known by his friends as Chip, was born in New London, Connecticut, where his father was in submarine training late in World War II. He grew up in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. After graduating from college at Auburn University in Alabama, Dr. Sanders completed a master's degree in higher education at the Florida State University before serving in the U. S. Army for three years, including a year overseas (in Vietnam). Dr. Sanders remained in the Army Reserve

and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Dr. Sanders worked in college and university administration during which time he earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in State-level Planning for Higher Education. He then began a career in business with Southern Bell, before transferring to AT&T. Dr. Sanders retired from the AT&T spin-off Avaya in 2001.

Dr. Sanders served as an elder and adult Sunday school leader in several Presbyterian Churches. Responding to a spiritual call to offer himself fully to the service of God, Dr. Sanders accepted the position of Director of Parish Services for the St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Morristown, where he worked for almost two years. Still spiritually restless, Dr. Sanders entered seminary at the Drew Theological School, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2006. He served for three years in the role of associate pastor for the Presbyterian Church of Madison, New Jersey, where he was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He serves on the Morristown Memorial Hospital Protestant Chaplaincy Board and the Drew Theological School Alumni Association Executive Board.

When asked about his calling to PVEC, Dr. Sanders says "he is excited by the potential that he believes God is calling forth from this unique body of believers."

Dr. Sanders is blessed by his wife Nell, who recently retired as principal of Roberts Elementary School in New Providence, New Jersey. They are quite proud of their four children and six grandchildren, who live in Trenton, New Jersey; Ashburn, Virginia; Atlanta, Georgia; and Tallahassee, Florida. His leisure pleasures include reading (non-fiction and comics), sharing ideas with others, crossword puzzles, music, family visits, cooking (and eating!), watching football and Yankees and Braves baseball games.

### In This Issue

- 1) Welcome to Rev. Dr. Charles R. Sanders
- 2) Our new Secretary; Mark your calendar; Help to save a life
- 3) Church Council News
- 4) Church Council – Something New
- 5) From The Pastor
- 6) Did You Know
- 7) Greetings All

## Erika



If you've called the church recently you have been delighted with the smiling voice that answers your call. That voice exudes warmth and welcome, and after a moment of conversation you discover there is caring and understanding there too. She is our interface with congregation members, with the public who are potential members of our congregation, brothers and sisters in Christ.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Erika Croat to our Panther Valley Ecumenical Church staff. Her position will be the office secretary. Erika has extensive work experience as an administrative assistant and sales support manager. Acting as developer and creator of a high-end portrait photography business, Erika has clearly shown her creative side as well. A graduate of Rutgers University, Erika displayed high academic achievement as a member of Psi Chi and Golden Key national academic honor societies. Erika resides in Oxford, NJ, with her two daughters Rebecca and Ashley.

## Mark your Calendars!

By: John Jurena

This year, PVEC will hold it's Spring Rummage Sale on Friday April 24 and Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>. There are several ways in which to help your church during this event. First, we need you donations! The following items are accepted: Clothes, children's books only, shoes, purses, children's furniture and toys, small working appliances, sports equipment and household items. We **WILL NOT** accept: Books, bed frames, mattresses, tires, curtain rods, bowling balls, large furniture **ABSOLUTELY NO COMPUTERS!**

We will also need people to volunteer during the sale for set-up, clean-up and sales. Also, please save your brown grocery bags for bag day!

Start your spring cleaning now and donate to this worthy cause!

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## Help to save a life

Join the American Cancer Society in celebrating the Greater Hackettstown kickoff of its 25th anniversary of Relay For Life at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 6, at Trinity United Methodist Church's Trinity House (Room 400) in Hackettstown. Relay For Life is an overnight celebration of life where teams of friends, family, and co-workers come together to celebrate the lives of those who have battled cancer, remember those lost and fight back against the disease. Learn how you can play a direct role in the Greater Hackettstown Relay For Life, which will take place May 29-30 at Field of Dreams in Independence Twp. For more information or to RSVP for the February 6 kickoff event, contact Kate Schellhase at 1-800-ACS-2345 or [Kate.Schellhase@Cancer.Org](mailto:Kate.Schellhase@Cancer.Org). For more information on the Greater Hackettstown Relay For Life, visit [www.relayforlife.org/greaterhackettstownnj](http://www.relayforlife.org/greaterhackettstownnj).

### 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



### **Christian Education**

#### **Baby Sitting:**

Once again Christian Education members are providing baby sitting service for parents from 4:30-9:00PM on Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, allowing them to have a romantic evening free from concern about their children. An evening of games and craft activities is planned along with a light supper. A registered nurse will also be present to put parent's minds at ease.

#### **Children's Sermon:**

The Children's Sermon will once again return to our Sunday morning services on February 15. Beginning that Sunday, children will accompany their parents to Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Rev. Sanders will provide a Children's Sermon after which the children will dismiss to Sunday school at approximately 10:15AM.

#### **VBS:**

Vacation Bible School is planned for the week of August 3-7. Betty Schultheis and Ron Reece will be attending the Presbyterian VBS Workshop on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Christian Outreach**

#### **Lord's Pantry News:**

The Lord's Pantry has had a very busy past three months. The economic problems are increasing the number of people needing food. The congregation has always been very supportive of the pantry and your support is greatly needed now.

You can help us help those in the community who need food by:

- Donating food
- Donating Shop Rite gift cards sold before and after church each week
- Making a monetary donation

Again, thank you all for your help.

### **Souper Bowl Sunday:**

It's Super Bowl time again which means we will be having Souper Bowl here at PVEC on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Delicious homemade soup will be served at Coffee Hour. Donations will be accepted and will go to our Lord's Pantry and to Sussex County's Project Homeless Connect a mission that distributes personal items to homeless people.

### **Care and Nurture**

#### **Personal Devotions:**

"These Days" is a devotional booklet edited by the Presbyterian Church. Many people from different denominations contribute their writing to its content. Readings may help you to focus on a way to deal with may be bothering you, or just assist you with daily living. Nurture and Care Commission is providing Complimentary copies of this useful booklet, "These Days" may be found at the front and back doors of PVEC. Be sure to pick up a new copy for 2009.

#### **Annual Event:**

The wonderful Christmas Concert held at PVEC on December 6<sup>th</sup> just may become an annual affair. The Care and Nurture Commission members are working at establishing it even as you read this article. The congregation and the community were enthusiastic about the event and provided us with positive feedback. We'll keep you posted.

### **Worship**

#### **Lent:**

The Ash Wednesday Service will be held at 7:30PM on February 25 in the Sanctuary.

A survey concerning Lenten Bible Study and Holy Week Services was distributed to the congregation the last Sunday in January and the results of that survey will determine the specific Holy Week Services to be held and the day and time of Bible Studies. This information will be available mid-February.

**Council News Continues on Next Page**

# Something New

## Support Services

The “NEW” Support Services Commission is beginning to make strides in correcting some of the problems that we have with our church facilities. Before I talk about the present and the future, I do want to commend some of the past efforts. The “Buildings and Grounds” commission accomplished more than I can give credit for as far as taking care of the property. Past members who are still active are – Bob Zinckgraf, Don Guelich and John Pflugfelder. I would love to have other past members rejoin to give the best service to the church.

Meanwhile, due to the diligent efforts of the three above-mentioned members, there have been several repairs and/or improvements to the heating system in the church. Progress is being made to complete a very needed roof repair. Another very crucial issue that came up suddenly was a problem with the septic system. Again, working with the previously mentioned – John Pflugfelder called in Bruce Mueller who worked with the team to locate the problem and recommended “Action Septic” to do the work. Bruce Mueller and Action Septic did their part of the work at no charge to the church. The church did have to pay an excavator to trench out the access to the septic tank. In addition; however, the tank was inspected and certified, again at no additional charge. Also, there was an access installed that will allow future services without having to do additional excavating.

I’m sure that the dynamic trio as I have begun to think of them, will continue to do an outstanding job and we are looking for more volunteers to join them.

Additionally, the previous “Stewardship and Communications Commission” is a committee under the Support Services Commission. This also includes the Happenings, which will begin to be a regular publication again.

With this change, the new Stewardship

Committee held a successful Fall Campaign under the enthusiastic leadership of Maxine Romig Volger who has in fact been a very important part of the Stewardship of PVEC for several years. Maxine also, had the help of Betty Schultheis, John Pflugfelder, Penny Newell as public relations, Marilyn Schaffer and John Jurena.

There are other items that have been put under the support services commission, which I am still learning about. You can help by leaving suggestions with the secretary or by emailing me at [ronreece@optonline.net](mailto:ronreece@optonline.net).

The support services commission is looking forward to providing the church with helpful and meaningful support in the upcoming years.

## Sunday School Studies

by Betty Schultheis

The topic of the Unit the children will be studying for the next four weeks is:

### **The Bible Teaches Me to Be a Friend Like Jesus**

January 18: Jesus is a Friend to Children

Mark 10:13-16

January 25: Jesus is a Friend to Mary, Martha, and

Lazarus

Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-5, 33-35, 38,39

February 1: Jesus is a Friend to a Samaritan Woman

John 4:5-9, 27-30, 39, 40

February 8: Jesus Is a Friend to Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus is your friend. Jesus wants you to be friends with others. What more important lessons could young children learn? In each lesson of this unit Jesus will be the model of friendship and your child will have opportunities to practice how to be a friend in different situations.

The Bible Words for this unit are an excellent principle to live by: “Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12). When we are secure in Jesus’ love, then we are free to love others.



# FROM THE PASTOR

It has been such a good first few weeks serving as your interim pastor! Thanks to each of you for your gracious welcome of me and of my wife, Nell. We already have come to appreciate some of your many gifts, and we know that our time with you will be fulfilling both spiritually and socially.

On Sunday January, the 11<sup>th</sup>, when we celebrated Baptism of the Lord Sunday, one of our scripture readings was the opening portion of Mark's Gospel, which included Jesus' baptism by John in the river Jordan. We read that John the Baptist was the one who "prepared the way" for the coming of Jesus. The role of an interim pastor is similar to John's; that is, it is the job of the interim pastor to "prepare the way" for the coming of your next called ("permanent") pastor. In accomplishing that task, I will be asking the Council and other members to continue to think about who you are, and who you hope to be, as a unique member of the body of Christ, the church universal. The main question is, of course, What do we discern that God is calling the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church to be and to do?

In my role as an interim pastor, I will also offer an occasional new way of doing something, like the retrieval of the small crystals from the baptismal font during the litany of Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Vows on January 11<sup>th</sup>. The purposes of occasionally doing something new include keeping us from becoming bored with a limited set of practices as well as honoring the various traditions (and emerging practices) of the four denominations represented in the founding of PVEC. There are infinite ways of celebrating the Good News of Jesus the Christ, and I hope you will continue to anticipate and enjoy these new ways as well as familiar ones.

It is my hope to visit with each of you in the coming weeks, in your home or in some other comfortable place, so that we can get to know each other better. Will you please email or call the office and let our secretary, Erika Croat, know what days or times would be best for our visit together? I will arrange my schedule to be available during those times, and I will email or call you to set up our time together.

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*"it is the job of the interim pastor to "prepare the way" for the coming of your next called ("permanent") pastor. " -Rev. Sanders*

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I hope you will feel invited always to contact me, via email, telephone, or in person. I will have office hours at least three mornings each week, and you are encouraged to call for an appointment so I can plan for our time together. If you have a personal emergency or other urgent reason to contact me when the office is closed, you may call my home (973-292-1246) or my cell phone (201-919-8908). My email address is [chipsanders@optonline.net](mailto:chipsanders@optonline.net).

May you enjoy God's blessings each day!

*Rev. Sanders*

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## Special Gifts

The Special Gifts Committee has received two gifts from John and Lynne Jurena to be used for PVEC's web site.

Eloise P. Mial gave a gift in lieu of flowers for a funeral.

If you are interested in learning more about our "Special Gifts" program, please contact Maxine Romig Volger.

## Did you know...

that we are collecting pennies and spare change at PVEC? We started this project seven or eight years ago as a way to supplement our operating budget. The first year the collection was just about equal to the cost of our lawn maintenance. Those coins added up!

Since then, the fund has helped send books to school children in an orphanage in Cameroon and more recently was added to fund raising efforts for our new piano in the choir loft. Currently the coins are kept in a "pennies" account in the bank waiting for the next project for which they are needed. Collection canisters are located in the Narthex and by the side door outside of the church office. So, reach in your pockets, empty your purses and bring in those spare coins and put them to good use!

## Do you know...

where the beautiful flowers on the communion table and/or flower stands at the front of the church come from?

They are purchased by members of the congregation. There is a "**flower calendar**" located on a bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. You may sign up on the date of your choice. Typically people sign up for family birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, or any other special date they wish to choose. More than one person may sign-up for the same Sunday. When that happens we have flowers on two stands at the front of the Sanctuary.

When you sign up on the calendar there is a place to write the person's name and occasion for the flowers or if they are simply to "honor" someone or in "memory" of someone and a place to check as to whether you wish to take the flowers home with you or wish to leave them. When you leave them, they are delivered by someone in the congregation to a member who is a "shut-in".

The information from the flower calendar is printed in the Sunday church bulletin on the date you selected. The flowers come from Calico Country Flowers and the cost to you is \$20.00. You may leave a check made payable to PVEC, mark flowers in the "for" space, in the church office or place it in the offering basket, or you may mail it to the church.

When no one signs up for flowers, the cost is born by the church, so why not take advantage of this lovely way to honor someone special?

## Be A Caring Family

By: Lila Minervino

Do you know the names of the people sitting around you each Sunday? Chances are they are usually the same people aren't they? We all tend to sit in the same pews week after week. Do you miss them when they aren't there? Since we are all one big PVEC family, why not give them a phone call when you haven't seen them for a couple of weeks? They can do the same for you. If you don't know the number, you can check the church directory on the website, or call Erika in the church office. Let's help take care of our "family".

## A Little Bit of Heaven

If you were one of the fortunate 300+ members of the audience at PVEC on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> you were entranced by a joyful, moving, musical experience. The Seton Hall Touring Choir, comprised of student, faculty, and alumna of Seton Hall and directed by Jeanette Hile sang a rich repertoire of Christmas music. They were accompanied by an accomplished brass ensemble. What a delight it was to hear the beautiful blend of rich voices singing the carols we love. In addition to the sound of the choir, there were numerous solo parts which displayed the deep rich talent pool of this musical organization

The Care and Nurture Commission planned and arranged for this marvelous event. Following the concert there was a reception in Fellowship Hall. Thousands of homemade cookies of every known variety graced platter upon platter on the festive Christmas tables. A delicious punch accompanied the festive fare.

Kudos to the Commission for providing us with this little bit of heaven.

## Reaching Out to Our Community

We began advertising our Worship Services on WRNJ Radio in December. It began with the Hanging of the Greens Service, then the Christmas Eve Services. We had several new people at both the 7:00 and the 11:00PM Christmas Eve Services.

The congregation approved a budget of \$200/month for radio advertising and \$1,000 for the year for newspaper advertising for 2009 at our annual meeting. We all realized this was something we needed to do. We hope you have heard the ads, as they have been very warm and inviting.

We have also been utilizing our sign to promote upcoming activities and all of our Commissions and Committees have worked very hard this past year planning and delivering wonderful worship and fellowship experiences/events for our congregation and community.

We are seeing new people as a result of this. Last year as we participated in the retreat and follow-up workshops to arrive at our church mission statement, we all expressed the desire to grow and fill the beautiful building that houses us. We need to spread our arms and welcome new members into our church "family".

The time is **NOW**. We have been a small church for the last couple of years and we know the names of everyone that sits in the pews around us (because we each sit in the same place week after week), and in fact most of us know everyone's names. Therefore, as we see new people in our midst, we need to be sure to welcome them and invite them to coffee hour. Both Judy Coffey and Betsy have said there is no more welcoming experience than being invited to participate in our coffee hours.

These are challenging times for families, some have lost their jobs, some have had to change jobs, life as we have known it is "unsettled". When things are unsettled people are more apt to seek help from above. Let's be ready to share our faith and fulfill our mission: to welcome all people into our multi-denominational community as we seek to grow in the knowledge and love of and service to Jesus Christ.

## News Wanted!

By: Betty Schultheis

In an effort to get back on track with a monthly *Happenings* newsletter, Ron and I have designed this input sheet. Please complete one for anything you would like in the *Happenings* newsletter and give it to Erika.

We ask that information be in by the 15th of the month.

The form is also on line at the Church website.

## Information for *The Happenings* PVEC Newsletter

Person Providing Information \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

What is happening? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When is it happening? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it happening? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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