

# ***PVEC Happenings***



*Panther Valley Ecumenical Church Official Newsletter*

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## **Guelich Wedding**

On December 26th, an American celebration of the marriage of Donald Guelich, Jr. and Satoko Norimoto was held at PVEC.

As part of the service, Lana Keiko Guelich, daughter of Donald and Satoko, was baptized by Pastor David.

Donald and Satoko were married in Japan on August 8, 2008 and are residing in Yokohama, Japan. Donald is the son of Donald Guelich, Sr. and Helen Guelich.



## **Letter of Appreciation**

I know you all join me in praising the work of Pastor David as he leads us to open our hearts and minds to new and improved ways to worship, serve our community and care for one another. Our new pastor has a remarkable ability to appreciate everyone he meets, accepting them "where they are" in their faith journey. As an ecumenical church, we could not have made a better choice to show us the way. God bless you in your ministry David; God has already blessed us with your leadership.

Donna Weinberg  
2010 Council Chair

## **Update from the Elevator Committee**

By Maxine Romig Volger

After the committee's second meeting, several concerns were discussed. Architect Charles Schaffer brought drawings that placed the new elevator inside our existing building using the stairway in the narthex which is next to the restroom. This would allow the elevator to reach the third floor and would eliminate new outside construction and additional expense.

The elevator would serve three floors. Further drawings will be completed for the next committee meeting.

Members of the committee are optimistic and excited. We want to get that elevator in place as soon as possible.



## “The History of Lent”

Lent is the Christian season preceding Easter. It traditionally symbolizes the spiritual preparation of the believer in anticipation of Jesus' Passion.

Traditionally Lent is celebrated as a forty day season of fasting, although if one counts the days on the calendar, it is hard to find the number forty. If one goes by the Western Christianity calendar and begins with Ash Wednesday, there are forty-six before Easter. Exclude Sundays and you have forty. Even in a season of fasting, Christians have never forgotten the joy of the resurrection that they chose to exclude Sundays from this season of preparation and fasting in honor of the Day of Resurrection.

Biblically, the forty days of Lent coincide with a number of historical remembrances of cleansing and preparation. As we walk through the Liturgical calendar of Lent on Sunday mornings we will remember for example Moses leading the nation of Israel through forty years wandering and preparation in the wilderness. We will remember Christ's forty days of fasting and preparation in the wilderness while Satan tempted him. And we will recall the cleansing of the earth in the forty days and forty nights of the flood during the time of Noah, ending in God's redemptive covenant

promise for all people.

Culturally, Lent has become for us a season of mediation and abstinence whereby individual pilgrims choose to abstain from ordinary enjoyments such as meat or alcohol in order to focus on spiritual things. We see evidence of this kind of accepted deprivation in American culture. Many public schools, for example, once chose to serve fish on Fridays in order to help provide for their students who were abstaining from red meat. McDonalds restaurants even introduced a “Filet-O-Fish” sandwich in 1963 recognizing the religious culturally created market need for a non-red meat alternative when they noticed how sales of hamburgers took a precipitous decline on Fridays. Today, our brothers and sisters of other faiths observe similar cleanses and fasts during the Jewish seasons of Passover and Yom Kippur and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

When Jesus undertook his fast and entered the wilderness, he did so alone. But when we enter this wilderness season of our lives; we do so hands clasped with our brothers and sisters in faith. As some of our friends choose to accept this season's special opportunity for personal growth by making changes in their lives focused

*“When Jesus undertook his fast and entered the wilderness, he did so alone. But when we enter this wilderness season of our lives; we do so hands clasped with our brothers and sisters in faith” -Pastor Wright*

on abstinence or a new kind of discipline, we all have an opportunity to encourage one another in these special fasts.

For others around us, this winter season can be an especially difficult time as they struggle with past grievances and sickness of the body as well as those of mind and spirit. There are friends within our church who have recently lost loved ones whom we are especially called to support in love. In this season of transition and preparation, as God does a new thing in our lives, we have the love and fellowship of our brothers and sisters in faith to encourage us on the road.

So as we approach Jerusalem together, take this season of Lent to be brave: to step out of familiar, comfortable and sometimes unhealthy patterns out into that wilderness space, knowing that what God has in store for you on the other side of the journey is a fullness of new life through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Christian Outreach

Christian Outreach finished 2009 with a record number of pantry calls. PVEC helped 135 local families throughout the year. We also helped over twenty-five families at Christmas with our Angel Program. All the participation from church members is greatly appreciated.

The Souper-Bowl event brought \$400 which will be used for the Power-Pack Program in local schools. Help is needed to coordinate weekend recipes, menus and shopping. Anyone interested in helping should leave their name and contact number with Erica in the church office.

Our featured food items for the next few weeks are shelf milk, coffee and tea. Thanks again for your continued support.

## Plan to Participate

The Christian Education Commission and the Worship Commission would like you to mark your calendars so that you can plan to participate in two upcoming events; The Seder on Palm Sunday and the Easter Sunrise Service.

Christian Education will again sponsor a Christian Seder. This is a tradition begun in 2007. Last year the tradition was significantly enriched by the hosting of the event by Greg and Ellen Maddock who have agreed to do it again.

The Hebrew word “Seder” means order. The people of Israel were obliged to remember the great saving acts of God on the first night Pesach (Passover) and to retell the story from generation to generation in a pre-

scribed manner. Thus, they deepened the understanding of their roots and strengthened their faith ties. For Christians, our Lord transformed that Jewish tradition into a “New Covenant in his Blood”. By fully understanding the heritage of this tradition, which goes back to Moses, we shall be better able to appreciate the New Covenant in Christ. By remembering and retelling our faith story, we hope we will deepen the bonds of love among all God’s family.

The Worship Commission invites you to join us and other congregations in a “community” Easter Sunrise Service at 6:00AM on Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at Alumni Field in Hackettstown. We are the “host” congregation.

There will be more information in upcoming Sunday bulletins. Palm Sunday is March 28<sup>th</sup> this year.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### Activities During Lent

**Lent Fellowship Night** - Sunday, March 14. Dinner at 6 pm – Hosted by Care & Nurture Commission. Intergenerational Activities at 7pm. This will be a joint fellowship celebration with our partner churches, First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown and Highlands Presbyterian.

**Christian Sedar** - On March 28th (Palm Sunday). More information to be announced.

### Special Holy Week Community Services

**Maundy Thursday Tenebrae:** Thursday April 1<sup>st</sup>— Location to be announced.

**Good Friday Community Service:** Friday April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12 noon at St. James Episcopal Church 214 Washington Ave, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

**New Easter Sunrise Service:** Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup> – 6 am Alumni Field (Hackettstown), off South Willow Grove St. (Hosted by Panther Valley Ecumenical Church)

## Musicians Needed!

Do you play guitar or another portable acoustic instrument? Do you feel comfortable playing for a group? Can you play with cold fingers? If so, Pastor Wright needs you!

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church will be host-

ing the new Hackettstown Area Community Easter Sunrise Service this April 4<sup>th</sup>.

We’re looking for a few good players who are up for musical accompaniment to help lead Easter singing while we gather at the park.

If this you, please see Pastor Wright to coordinate.

# Recipe Corner..

*Many of you have asked me for two recipes from Abigail's baptism brunch. Here they are, enjoy!*  
*-Donna Weinberg*

## Mac & Cheese

### Ingredients

- 8 oz elbow macaroni (or the pasta of your choice)
- 8 oz. sharp Cheddar cheese
- 12 oz. container small curd cottage cheese
- 8 oz. container sour cream
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil, add pasta, and cook until "al dente"; drain.
2. In 9x13 inch baking dish, stir together macaroni, shredded Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper. In a small bowl, mix together bread crumbs and melted butter. Sprinkle topping over macaroni mixture.
3. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until top is golden. (Can be frozen before baking – add ½ cup of pasta water to the cheese mixture if freezing).

## Bacon/Cheddar/Chive Muffins

(Recipe Makes 12 large muffins or 24 small muffins)

- 6 thick-cut bacon slices
- 3 ¾ cups bread flour
- 1 ½ Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½ in. cubes
- 2 ½ cups (packed) coarsely grated sharp cheddar cheese (about 12 ozs.)
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh chives
- 1 ¾ cup buttermilk

### Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line heavy large baking pan with parchment paper. Cook bacon in heavy large skillet over medium heat until crisp and brown. Transfer bacon to paper towels to drain, then chop coarsely.

Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in processor; blend 5 seconds. Add butter cubes. Blend until course meal forms, about 30 seconds. Transfer flour mixture to large bowl. Add cheddar cheese, fresh chives, and chopped bacon; toss to blend. Gradually add buttermilk, stirring to moisten evenly (batter will be sticky). With floured hands, roll ½ cup batter into a ball and place on parchment paper – 2 inches apart – bake 18 to 20 minutes. You may brush biscuits with melted butter before baking if desired (I didn't). Serve with honey, or make a sandwich!

# Togetherness Circle

## TO THE WOMEN OF PVEC

You are cordially invited to join the women of PVEC on the third Thursday of each month at 10:30 in the conference room. This is when the TOGETHERNESS CIRCLE meets for their meetings.

If you are not familiar with this group, you are in for a treat! Any women of the church (whether members or not) are invited. Everyone brings a sandwich from home and tea, coffee and homemade dessert are provided. After a short business meeting and devotional reading an interesting program is provided. The January program was a video presentation of the history of PVEC. It was prepared and presented by Maureen Bloom and everyone enjoyed seeing the sanctuary and the rest of the building progress from a green field to our present church building. We also enjoyed seeing pictures of our "old timers" as they looked through the years! It was great to see how we started, where we have been and how we got to our present place in Allamuchy. After the program, lunch and fellowship follow.

This is the group responsible for making the prayer shawls and providing the blankets that are presented at baptisms. Not everyone can knit, so don't let that stop you from attending!

If you have questions, see Eloise Mial or Ella Yaeger. We look forward to seeing you in February!

**Remember, the third Thursday of each month at 10:30. See you there!**



### What Is Lent?

Betty Schultheis

Lent is a 40-day period before Easter. It begins on *Ash Wednesday*, February 9, 2005 and ends on *Holy Saturday*, March 26, 2005. Sundays are skipped when counting the 40 days, because Sundays commemorate the Resurrection.

The colors for Lent are purple or blue, royal colors to prepare for the King.

Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock, a preparation for Easter. By observ-

ing the 40 days of Lent, we are imitating Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for 40 days.

The UCC web-site tells us that "Lent is a season of giving, embodied in the sacrificial giving of Christ. At Easter God transforms that giving into victory and joy. At Pentecost, God gives again- the Spirit comes. These holy days are invitations to join with Christ and to give and give, and joyously give again what God has given to us. We love, we give, because God first loved us, gave to us."

We will have the opportunity to participate in several "special"

worship services during Lent: *Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday*. Don't miss the opportunity to enrich your Christian experience through attending these services and enjoying the fellowship with the other churches with whom we are sharing these worship experiences.

A reminder, one of the wonderful things about living in today's world is the availability of the Internet. If you want to know the history of Lent and the customs throughout time practiced by different denominations during Lent, spend five minutes and check it out.

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in Christ”*

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## **Happenings Deadline**

Please submit all articles by the 15th of the month for timely publication. All articles received after that date will be published in the newsletter for the following month.