



## Meet our new Secretary!

Sandra Socha has joined our office staff. Sandra has worked five years, part time, for St. Mathews in Paramus.

She has experience using Church Windows, MS Word, MS Publisher, and several other programs which will be an asset to the office.

She recently graduated from Ramapo College where she majored in visual arts with a double minor in photography and graphics design. With these talents, she has already begun to add some interesting things to the office.

Sandra also does photography for the Tri-County Fire Department and the Mansfield EMS squad.

April 4, 2008, Sandra and her fiancé Jim Erdman are planning to get married.

If you have the opportunity to stop by and greet her, you will be blessed with a friendly smile and a warm personality.

## Eagle Scout Project Nears Completion

James Blake created a garden in memory of Jeanne Bateman as his Eagle Scout project. He expanded, by a two yard radius, the perennial garden that Jeanne created years ago. He put down new topsoil and re-mulched the garden as well as adding new plants. The plants added include Astillbes, Blue and Red Veronica, Coreopsis, Dwarf Fountain Grass, Mountain Pink, Inkberries, and Dragon's Blood Sedum. He is currently building two benches to add to the garden and will be making a stone walkway to the garden.

The enhanced garden is an attractive addition to the Church landscaping and will be enjoyed by all. Thank you James.



The garden is not completed yet; however, it is still a pleasure to the eye.

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# Reconnecting with Our Founding Denominations

During the past year or so, we have had many discussions concerning how we can re-connect with the four founding denominations: United Methodist, Presbyterian USA, United Church of Christ, and Episcopal. Our old structure no longer serves us as around 40% of our current congregation now falls into the “ecumenical category”, meaning they came to us from denominations/faiths other than the four founding denominations. They are among others: Assembly of God, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.

The benefit of reconnecting is to share in the fabulous training programs, events, fellowship offerings, programs for our children and youth, special programs for seniors, etc. We pay a monthly fee to each of the founding denominations that entitles us to participate in their programs.

Recently John Jurena has disseminated via email announcements of some of the

opportunities available to us. Part of the revision to the By-laws creates a methodology for this reconnection. It proposes that a Denominational Committee be created. There would be one or two persons who would serve as liaisons to each of the four founding denominations for a period of one year.

It is simple to stay abreast of what is going on in each denomination today if you have a computer and an internet connection. In 10-15 minutes you can locate opportunities, read about them and assess the value to our congregation. Then, as a liaison, you would communicate that information to the appropriate person in the church.

For example, John Jurena located an “event” he thought our congregation should be interested in. He emailed the announcement to those of us having email, then had copies made for inserts to our Sunday Bulletin. Finally, sign-up sheets were made and placed in Fellowship Hall so that people could now “commit” to the event.

This idea of reconnecting is a very exciting one. It will allow our small church to offer the same, in fact, a larger variety of programs and opportunities than any large **single** denomination church. It means that although you personally may be a Baptist you can attend Presbyterian, Episcopal, UCC and United Methodist events. This is an idea that we need to embrace and nurture immediately.

## **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

# Pastoral Update From Council



I'm pleased to tell you that the search for a new pastor is going well. The Council completed the comprehensive "Self Study" required by the Episcopal Diocese. This document is available in the church office if anyone wishes to read it.

Canon Carter Echols will be meeting with the full Council on July 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the process and timeline for placing a pastor in our pulpit and the salary to be offered.

It is important that the congregation continue to be supportive of each other and of church activities as we move through this transitional time so that we are ready and poised to move forward when our new leader joins us.

We will be sharing the information we receive on the 16<sup>th</sup> with the congregation the following Sunday.

If you have any questions, contact a Council member.

*Evelyn Self*

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## By-laws Revision

The congregation approved the suspension of Article III (The Council) of the By-laws last summer with the understanding that Council would revise that section in 2007 and present it to a vote of the congregation.

Gradual implementation of the new Council organization began in September of 2006 and is now complete as evidenced by the listings in the Church Bulletin.

We have reduced the Council from 15 to 12 members. Commissions have been reduced from

seven to five. The new Commissions are: Worship, Christian Education, Christian Outreach, Care and Nurture, and Support Services.

In addition to the four officers of Council, the five Commission Chairs sit on Council and a representative from the congregation at large, a youth representative and the Sunday School Team Leader.

The By-laws Revision committee comprised of Lisa Blake, Charlie Schaffer, Glenn Stevenson, Mitzi Yamawaki and chair Betty Schultheis have completed their work revising Article III (The Council), Article V (The Commissions), Article VIII Appendix C (The Commissions of the Church) and Article VIII Appendix D (The Committees of the Church). The revisions are going to Council members in July to review.

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## Reaching Out

Starting with the August issue of *The Happenings*, There will be an article in each issue about one of the many, many organizations that meet in our church building. Some of these are children's organizations such as Cub Scouts, Brownies or Girl Scouts and others are family based such as Holistic Moms.

During the last school year we had nearly 300 adults and children in our building every week, yet of that number less than 20 attended our church.

We are going to try to remedy that. What a golden opportunity to grow our Sunday School program and our Church membership. Some of you will be asked to assist in this effort, please be prepared to say "yes".

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## Remembering Youth Sunday 2007... with smiles on our faces

By Betty Schultheis

Experiencing our young people conducting the Sunday morning worship service brought a glow to my heart. We were greeted at the door by the sweet smiling faces of Emily and Lauren Itkor. We received our bulletins from the Wilson brothers, Cory and Tyler. Then, the service began.



Youth Sunday greeters, Emily and Lauren Itkor.



Youth Sunday ushers, Cory and Tyler Wilson.

Katie Robinson, Brian Zinn and Cory Wilson led the call to worship, prayer of confession, read scripture and led the statement of faith with enthusiasm and in clear voices. There was no sign of nervousness apparent to us in the congregation.



From left to right are Rev. Wayne L. Owens, James Blake, Brian Zinn and Katie Robinson.

For the second year, James Blake proved that a high school student can indeed lead a congregation in worship. His sermon entitled “*Give Thanks for Summer*” delivered a thought provoking message. Clearly James has a bright future before him.

Thirty-five certificates of participation were awarded to the children and teens who attended the Sunday School and Youth Group program during the 2006-2007 year.

## Bouquets to Our Dedicated Teachers

By Betty Schultheis

A well deserved “thank you” to the men and women who teach our children and youth on Sunday mornings. This past year we had six classes: Diane Ward facilitated the Nursery and toddler group. The pre-K and Kindergarten class was taught by the team of Heidi Itkor and Lauren Wittig, assisted by Melissa Billington. The first through third grades were taught by the team of Barbara Hikel and Diane Wilson. Lisa Blake, Nadine Robinson and Kate Stiner teamed to teach the fourth through sixth graders. Dave Robinson and Rick Wilson taught the seventh and eighth graders, and last but certainly not least, Bill Dowd facilitated the High School Student’s Youth Group.

We utilize the Group Curricula for our Sunday School. Each week the lesson includes Christian music from CDs provided with the curriculum for each age group, activities to teach the lesson point and a workbook page to summarize the learning points. These adults are always prepared and it is a delight to make the rounds and hear children/teens participating and evidence learning taking place. Photos on page seven.

# Register NOW for VBS

## The Parables of Jesus

The time has come for you to “**register**” for VBS. Since we will be providing a light supper on Wednesday and Thursday night, and since we will be having projects which require craft and building materials, we need to know who will be attending so we are prepared. There is a \$5.00 registration fee per family.

The registration brochures are in the office and on a table in Fellowship Hall on Sunday.

The VBS program is a great family activity and interesting and fun for all ages. We will be hearing parables, learning the lessons each teaches us for life, then making/building something useful that is appropriate for the lesson taught by the parable.

Wednesday and Thursday’s program will begin at 6:30PM with a light supper followed by the learning and activity workshops. Three workshops will be offered and you must choose which one you will attend for the two evenings. The workshops are from 7:00 to 8:30PM

Workshop #1 Glimpses of the Kingdom includes:

- parables that teach you to see things in a different way
- baking bread
- making cards

Workshop #2 There’s A Place for You includes:

- parables of the lost sheep and the prodigal son
- going on a treasure hunt
- making a treasure chest

Workshop #3 Building a Foundation includes:

- parable of the fig tree, and the houses: one on the sand the other on a rock
- building a picnic table

Then, on Friday night we will begin with a barbeque at 7:00PM and that will be followed by vespers, singing and a campfire. We’ll provide the food.

We have invited the congregations from St. James Episcopal Church in Hackettstown and the Hackettstown Presbyterian cluster of churches to join us for VBS.

This would be a great time to invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate that we can be the evangelists that we committed to be when we signed the church covenant...and a wonderful way to comfortably meet new people and make them feel welcome.

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## Summer Vespers

The Worship Commission invites you to participate in the first annual Summer Vespers Program.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 18 from 7:00-9:00PM. We will have a picnic outside on our lawn followed by singing...we’re hoping to include some of our congregational musicians on the keyboard, guitar and accordion.

There will be a short devotional service followed by an old-fashioned hymn sing, some praise music, some campfire songs, a little hand clapping, maybe even some foot stomping, and a lot of fellowship.

We have invited the congregations of St. James Episcopal Church in Hackettstown and the Hackettstown Presbyterian Cluster to join us.

We will have sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall for the picnic.

This is another opportunity to invite family, friends and neighbors to an evening of fun and fellowship.

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## Announcement

Roy Sargent the new Organist/Choir Director will be starting on August 14<sup>th</sup>. *The Happenings* August issue will carry a picture and interview of Roy.

## Memorial and Special Gifts Committee News

By: Maxine Romig Volger

The Memorial and Special Gifts Committee received a very meaningful gift in Memory of Jeanne Bateman from Robert and Cathy Zinckgraf. They donated new planters and plantings for the front steps of Panther Valley Ecumenical Church.

In addition – this month the dead maple tree in front of the church was replaced from undesignated funds of the committee.



## Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour has now been operating in “volunteer sign-up” mode for four full months and it seems to be working. Remember the focus is on meeting and greeting new people and having fellowship with all.

Beginning July 1 the **Care and Nurture Commission** chaired by Maxine Romig Volger has assumed responsibility for putting out the sign-up sheets, seeing that the reminder letters are sent and providing the host and hostess nametags.

The Commission wishes to thank the following people for being hosts/hostesses since March when we began the Volunteer sign-up mode:

**March:** Kate Stiner, Barbara Hikel, Nadine and Dave Robinson, Barbara Philipp, Donna Weinberg, Joan Gibbs, Kathy Pflugfelder, Heidi Itkor, Ella Yager, Tracy Quinn, Laurie Krauss, Mitzi Yamawaki, Pat Billington, Catherine Fletcher, Mary Zellars, Cylvia Ultz

**April:** Nancy Mallett, Nadine and Dave Robinson, Bob and Irene Lobell, Mitzi Yamawaki, Evelyn Self, Betty Schultheis and Ron Reece

**May:** Jeanne Riccardelli, Linda Trent, Nancy Mallett, Anna Weber, Ella Yager, Betty Schultheis and Ron Reece, Evelyn Self

**June:** John and Kathy Pflugfelder, Marilyn Schaffer, Don and Faith Farmer, Mitzi Yamawaki, Estella Burke, Betty Schultheis, Kathy Zinckgraf, Donna Weinberg, Evelyn Self

## Keep Them in Your Prayers



Please continue to keep Jerry and Penny Newell in your prayers and Jerry recovers at home.

Ron Philipp remains in the ICU at Hackettstown Hospital, keep Barbara and Ron in your prayers.

# Our Members Make News

Did you know that **Kate Stiner** was selected “Teacher of the Year” at the Allamuchy Elementary School? Kate is an “awesome” science teacher according to students, parents and other teachers.

**James Blake** played character Seymour Krelborn in the Hackettstown High School spring musical “Little Shop of Horrors. At Senior awards night he received the President’s Award, the HHS Band Booster’s Award, and the Friends of Fencing Scholarship. He graduated with High Honors and was inducted into the National Honor Society and French Honor Society.

There was a feature article about **Frank and Joan Gibbs** and their sons and Gibbsquest, the farm they own in a recent copy of the Warren County Reporter. The article is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. It’s a “must” read.



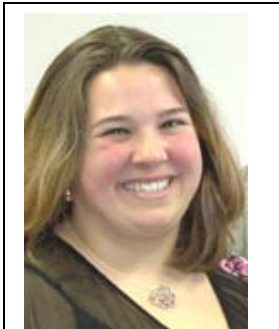
Barbara Hikel



Heidi Itkor



Kate Stiner



Melissa Billington



Lisa Blake



Lauren Wittig



Bill Dowd



The Wilson Family

Some Photos were not available for printing.

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**Mark Your Calendars!  
Don't Miss These Important Events**

**Vacation Bible School! July 25, 26, 27**

**Vesper Service; August 18**

