



# The PVEM Happenings



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## Getting to Know the Commissions

### The Stewardship and Communication Commission

The Stewardship and Communication Commission would like to thank all of our members and friends that have supported our 2005 Annual Campaign and Maintenance Fund efforts thus far this year. With 64 operating pledges totaling \$133,596 and 41 Maintenance Fund pledges totaling \$15,999, we'll be in good financial shape provided we are all faithful to our pledge amounts throughout the year.

With the summer months upon us, our thoughts naturally turn to warm sunshine, gardens in bloom, and much needed vacations. But the financial needs and obligations of our Church don't take a vacation, and your continued financial support during the summer months is crucial in order to enable the Church to support and grow our many programs and missions. Please help us to continue our work through

Commissions

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## New Leadership Team for Christian Education

By: Amy Testa

We would like to announce that we now have a brand new Leadership Team (previously known as the church school superintendent). The team consists of Barbara Rigo, Lauren Wittig and Amy Testa. They are the "team" that will be organizing and coordinating the Church School. Each team member has her own special gifts to give and welcome the chance to share these gifts with the children. They will be working together to create a Church School where the children learn about God and have fun as well.

**Our Leadership Team will be the support system for the teachers and the children.** We will plan the lessons, (remember the Lesson in a bag?!), we'll have all materials that are required, we will be there to help in anyway possible and we have resources available to help you. Our main goal is to have the Church School running smoothly and the children to learn about their faith, God's love and have fun!

**By-the-way. . . We are looking for teachers for next year.** We would like to have three teachers for each class. This way the three teachers can work out a schedule between themselves so the children will have continuity. We want the children and teachers to get to know each other.

**If you are interested in teaching, please let one of the leadership team know! Thank you for all your support.**

Life isn't measured by how many breaths we take, but how many times our breath is taken.

your financial support during the summer months. As always, the Stewardship and Communication Commission extends our sincere thanks for your response and continuing support.

## Christian Outreach News:

Join us at Allamuchy Day on June 4th between 12 and 4 pm. The Christian Outreach Commission will be selling our delicious Strawberry Shortcake and Spring/Summer crafts and tablecloths. The cost of the dessert is \$2.50 and all proceeds go to our mission projects. We hope we see you there!

On Sunday, June 5th we will be hosting Coffee Hour and have our annual Strawberry Festival at PVEM. There will be Strawberry Shortcake for sale along with Spring and Summer crafts and tablecloths (unless we sell out at Allamuchy Day!). Cost is \$2.50 and all proceeds go to the food pantry and other mission projects.

## Worship Commission News Prayer Power

The Worship Commission has been discussing expanding the role of prayer in our worship and is developing a brochure for use by the congregation.

You may have noticed the prayer cards placed by the prayer list. The cards will provide information allowing more "focused" prayer. For example, if a family member is anticipating having surgery, a notice can be placed in the Sunday bulletin so everyone can pray for your loved one.

The brochure will explain all of the opportunities for prayer, but in the interim, we thought we would introduce some of the enhancements so that you could begin utilizing them.

We also want to introduce an opportunity for individuals wanting to pray with someone, to remain in the sanctuary following the Sunday morning service and a member(s) of the "prayer chain" will pray with you.

The Commission is also compiling a Prayer Book that will include prayers for all five categories of prayer:

- ◆ Praise
- ◆ Thanksgiving
- ◆ Confession
- ◆ Supplication (requests for others)
- ◆ Petition (requests for ourselves)

Anyone wishing to contribute a prayer to the Prayer Book may place a copy of your prayer in the Worship Commission's **Idea Box** located in the narthex.



## Please Honor the Happenings Deadline

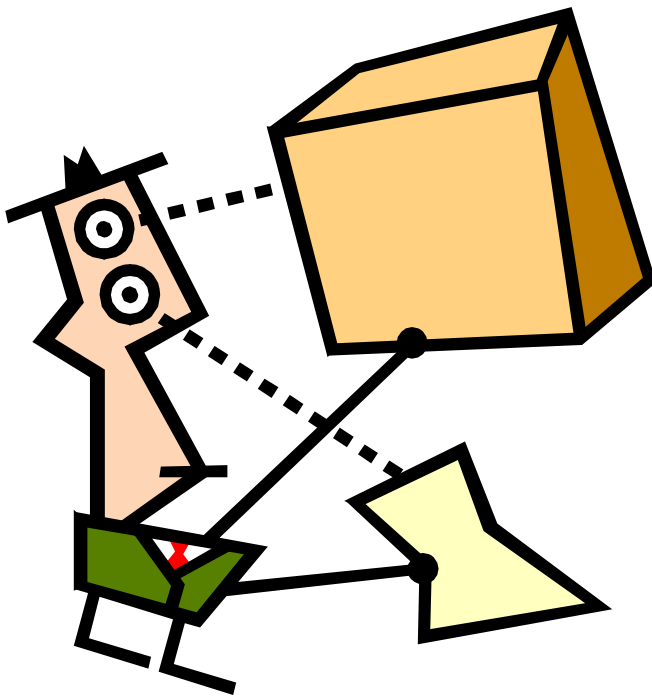
Please submit all articles by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for timely publication. It takes time to build the newsletter; however, if for some reason you don't have the information for the article that you know you will need space for, just let us know so we can reserve the space. We realize that 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

# Idea Box

Just a reminder that the Worship Commission has an **"Idea Box"** located in the narthex. The purpose of the box is for you, the congregation, to share your ideas for worship with us.

Many of your ideas have been implemented in the past two or three years, making the worship experience more enjoyable for all of us.

Recently our box has been quite empty so we thought perhaps you needed a reminder...so don't be shy...share.



# A Lesson in English

Some other reasons to be grateful if you grew up speaking English:

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture.
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 8) At the Army base, a bass was painted on the head of a bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- 18) After a number of Novocain injections, my jaw got number.
- 19) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 20) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 21) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?
- 22) I spent last evening evening out a pile of dirt.

Look for more in next month's Happenings.

## Blood Drive Successful

We had 40 people register to give blood and they were able to keep 36 pints!!!! We more than doubled the amount from last year and we exceeded our goal for this year. It was wonderful!!!! We had several walk-ins which was a big help and our members and my jazzercise buddies really helped to top our goal.

Thank you so much to everyone, and especially John Jurena for setting up the computer programs so people could e-mail me, for advertising, for making the announcements in church, and being there all along the way. Thank you to Ron Reece for fixing and putting up the banner outside, the majority of our walk-ins said they saw the sign and came in. Thank you to Dave Robinson for putting all the ads in the various newspapers; I also received registrations from the newspaper ads.

Thank you Amy for putting the announcements in the bulletin every week for many weeks. Mary Lou, thank you for all your support and guidance, and a great big thank you to Glenn too.

Now on to the best news, John Jurena won the T-shirt. Bob Zinckgraf won the blood drop, and Maureen Bloom won the bear.

I thought everyone at Miller Memorial did a superbly professional job and I will be sending them and all the donors thank you notes. Take care and may God Bless.

Carol



Linda your history is fine, but your blood pressure is too low today.



Rick Wilson ready for the sacrificial moment and John Pflugfelder, Sr. in the background being interviewed for his moment at the needle.

## Allamuchy Day

The Stewardship and Communications Commission will be hosting the PVEM Booth at the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Allamuchy Day, this Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>.

The event opens at 12:00 noon with a parade through the village of Allamuchy down to the Elementary School. All of the booths are located on the school grounds.

Come join us for an afternoon of food, games, music, a talent show, craft booths, and information booths and lots of fun.

We will be distributing PVEM pins, church brochures and any information that has been provided to us by the various Commissions and committees within the church.

## Unity Defined

The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.

## High School Update

### Garden:

Despite the wet weather small vegetables and herbs were planted in our garden for Carmen Ministries. We still have seeds to get into the ground so we're hoping for a sunny Sunday.

### May Baskets:

On May 8<sup>th</sup> we took command of the kitchen and baked banana bread, blueberry muffins and brownies and made " May goodie baskets" for seven members of our congregation who are unable to attend church. We also enclosed cards letting them know that we were thinking of them.

### Fund Raising:

We are continuing to take orders for note cards to raise money for both a mission project and for our attendance at work camp in 2006.

There are 10 note cards and 10 envelopes for \$10.00. We get to keep \$5.00 for our projects. There are Plain or Thank You cards. You may order a mixed box with two each of five different cards, or all 10 of one variety. Place your order one Sunday and receive the cards the next.

### First Sundays:

The first Sunday of every month we attend the regular worship service. We serve as greeters, read the scripture and assist the altar guild with Communion.



Character is the sum and total of a person's choices.

## Upcoming Events

June 12	Youth Sunday
	Church Picnic
June 19	Father's Day

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## NJ UCC Cares

### Voices of Compassion

A benefit Concert for South Asia and East Africa.

The New Jersey Assoc. of UCC churches will be sponsoring a special night of music on Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM at First Congregational Church in Montclair. The admission is \$10. All proceeds will go to our UCC efforts to bring compassionate aid to those who desperately need it.

It will be a night of all kinds of music.(Christian Music). They are looking for anyone who performs-Contemporary, Spoken Word, Hip Hop, New Age, quartets, soloists and our traditional choirs. This will be a night of music for all ages.

If interested in attending, please call the church office. Thank you.

## Quotable

When a man marries a woman,  
they become one; but the  
trouble starts when they try  
to decide which one.



# FROM THE PASTOR

Below is an article by Jim Wallis, an evangelical Christian who founded *Sojourners Magazine* in 1971. His recent book is *The Soul of Politics*. He is also the head of Call to Renewal, a faith-based anti-poverty organization. For 35 years Jim Wallis has espoused a profound evangelical, Christian faith and a deep commitment to social justice. If you wish to learn more about him, simply type either his name or *Sojourners* in your computer's search engine.

I invite you to read the following article and join me for a discussion after church on June 5. While I don't expect all of you to agree with him, I do believe that he raises some points that bear on this congregation's identity and ministry. Can we be a voice of faith that transcends political agendas? Should we? Can we be a voice of faith that bears witness to reconciliation and offers healing? Should we? If we choose this path, what might our ministry look like?

If you cannot be present on June 5, just give me a call and we will talk. I look forward to the dialogue and ask all of you to pray that we may be open to hear the Spirit's word to us.

Mary Lou

## **An Attempt to Hijack Christianity**

Last week, I wrote about the "Justice Sunday" event held at a Louisville, Kentucky, mega-church. James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Prison Fellowship's Chuck Colson, and Southern Baptist leader Albert Mohler were joined by Senate Majority Leader, Bill Frist on video in the event titled "Stop the Filibuster Against People of

Faith." Of course, I have no objection to Christian leaders expressing their faith in the public arena – it's a good thing that I do all the time. The question is not whether to do so, but how. I heard more and more about "Justice Sunday," it felt to me like it was crossing an important line – saying that a political issue was a test of faith.

So when I was invited to speak at an interfaith "Freedom and Faith" service at Central Presbyterian Church in Louisville, I agreed. On Sunday morning, I flew to Louisville, and that afternoon addressed more than 1,000 people who attended the rally. I didn't go to say that these leaders shouldn't bring their faith into politics; the issues concerning them – abortion and family values – are also important to me. But the way they were doing it was wrong. The clear implication of their message was that those who opposed them are not people of faith.

We can get some historical perspective by looking at how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did it - and he was the church leader who did it best. Once after he was arrested, he wrote a very famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," addressed to the white clergy who were opposing him on the issues of racial segregation and violence against black people. Never once did he say that they were not people of faith. He appealed to their faith, challenged their faith, asked them to go deeper with their faith, but he never said they were not real Christians. If Dr. King refused to attack the integrity and faith of his opponents over such a clear gospel issue, how can the Religious Right do it over presidential nominees and a Senate procedural issue known as the filibuster?

After the "Justice Sunday" event, and the controversy surrounding it, some of the sponsors are denying they ever claimed that those who oppose them are hostile to people of faith. Yet their words stand for themselves. In the letter announcing the event on the Family Research Council web site, Tony Perkins wrote: "Many of these nominees to

the all-important appellate court level are being blocked... because they are people of faith and moral convictions.... We must stop this unprecedented filibuster of people of faith."

So, I told the Louisville rally that when someone has stolen our faith in the public arena, it is time to take our faith back. "Justice Sunday" was an attempt to hijack Christianity for a partisan and ideological agenda. Those on the Religious Right are declaring a religious war to give their version of faith religious supremacy in America. And some members of the Republican Party seem ready almost to declare a Christian theocracy in America. It is time to take back both our faith and our Constitution.

It is now clear there are some who will fight this religious war by any means necessary. So we will fight, but not the way they do. We must never lie or misrepresent the facts or the truth. We must not demonize or vilify those who are our opponents. We must claim that those who disagree with our judgments are still real people of faith. We must not fight the way they do, but fight we must. A great deal is at stake in this battle for the heart and soul of faith in America and for the nation's future itself. We will not allow faith to be put into the service of one political agenda.

This is a call for the rest of the churches to wake up. This is a call for people of faith everywhere to stand up and let their faith be heard. This is not a call to be just concerned, or just a little worried, or even just alarmed. This is a call for clear speech and courageous action. This is a call to take back our faith, and in the words of the prophet Micah, "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God."



## Coffee Hour

In case you've ever wondered how all of those wonderful cookies, brownies, bagels, etc. appear like magic on the tables in Fellowship Hall every Sunday morning after Worship Service. It's because the "Master Scheduler" (for 2005, it's Penny Newell) has contacted the various Commissions and Denominational Groups to host coffee hour and bring the goodies.

The Calendar for 2005:

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

## Worship Enhancing Accessories

Do you need longer arms in order to read the church bulletin, pew Bible or Hymnal? Do you wish the announcements were louder? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you need to utilize the items placed on the "Worship Enhancing Accessories" table on the left in the narthex.

You will find large print bulletins, pew Bibles, and Hymnals there as well as hearing aids.

Anyone needing a wheelchair during Worship Service should contact an usher as there is one available.

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We're on the web [www.pvem.net](http://www.pvem.net)



## Auction Action

by Betty Schultheis

The goal is to raise \$ 20-\$25,000 for projects within the church. About half of the funds will go towards establishing the Memorial Garden. Funding the benevolences and providing funds for the work of the Commissions will comprise the rest.

The Planning Committee firmed up the paper work necessary to be completed by people donating items/services to be auctioned off and the contracts to be signed by people/businesses advertising in the program.

The date of the Auction is Saturday, May 20, 2006. Marilyn Schaffer and Betty Schultheis will be contacting congregation members regarding the donation of items to be auctioned.

Other churches and institutions sponsoring auctions have been contacted and it seems that "home-made" items are big money makers. So, if you are one of those talented people who have woodworking skills, artistic skills (painting, sculpturing, etc.) can quilt, knit, or crochet, are a gourmet cook, a baker....we want your products.

Services are also in demand: grass cutting, tree pruning, baby-sitting, chauffeuring, pet-sitting, etc. be thinking about what you can offer.

**Happenings** is a newsletter of the Panther Valley Ecumenical Ministry: A multi denominational Church.

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**The Open Forum** is for all members to voice their opinions and ideas.

**All commissions, committees and members are invited to submit articles and photos.**

