



The PVEC Happenings



Volume 4, Issue 2

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Where does modern communications find a solution to the basic needs of our congregation? Presently, we need to let “ALL OF OUR MEMBERS”, past and present know what we, as a church, are doing. The weekly bulletin lets the faithful members who are present weekly, know what is happening. The internet, also lets people who have access to the internet, know what is happening. What happens to the ones who are disillusioned and not attending the weekly services or those who are not in touch with the internet?

The answer is in an old antiquated media called the news print. The monthly Happenings has recently been under fire because there has been no monthly publications. The answer to that is – every person in leadership who needs to communicate to the congregation should send information to the Happenings for publication. Where is the communications from the various people who should provide the information?

Council, commissions, committees, groups with special interest in the church??? None of you need to be writers – just provide information about your activity and we can compose the article for you. With this I ask, “WHERE ARE YOU”? All of us are responsible for communications in our church.

What Does It Mean to be “Ecumenical”?

Many of you have been questioning what you perceive as “changes” being made to our worship services. The Worship Commission promised you we would address these changes in this issue of *Happenings*.

In order to properly address the issue we must look at where we are and where we’ve been and how we got there. Then we can look to the future and where we think we want to go. We hope you will read this with prayerful consideration.

The current PVEC Church Brochure states the following:

We are an inclusive congregation founded by:

- Episcopal Church
- United Church of Christ
- Presbyterian Church, USA
- United Methodist Church
- Ecumenical Community

The first four denominations consist of members of their respective religious denominations. However, a substantial number of our members from other Christian traditions choose to join the ecumenical congregation rather than one of the four denominations. When people unite with this congregation, they continue their membership in their denomination of choice.

In practice, we worship as one ecumenical congregation, participating in one another's traditions. Yes, it is different. Our Church is here as a witness that our unity in Christ enables us to live and worship together without compromising our most treasured traditions.

In the beginning:

The Church was founded in 1969, dedicated by the four founding denominations in 1979, and the current building housing the sanctuary was constructed in 1980. For many years the four denominations played a prominent role in both the worship and the organization of the church. Representatives of each of the

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Ecumenical

denominations attended organizational meetings of each of the denominations on a quarterly basis. These “denominational representatives” met with members of the congregation who were from the denomination they represented on a regular basis and a section of the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall was dedicated to each of the four denominations to communicate programs available and religious and social issues being discussed in each of the denominations.

There were elected representatives from each of the four denominations on the Church Council and each was represented on the Worship Commission and the Christian Outreach Commission. Sunday Worship was representative of each of the denominations. Each month we rotated through a Methodist Sunday, a Presbyterian Sunday, a UCC Sunday and an Episcopal Sunday.

Transitioning change:

Then, for whatever reason, it became more difficult to get members to serve as denominational representatives, so denominational representatives quit attending the meetings and there was no longer involvement by our church in the various projects or religious and social issues of the four founding denominations. We became “inwardly focused”.

In 2006 our congregation hosted the “Unity in Prayer Week” services and welcomed the hierarchy of the four founding denominations to a panel discussion with the congregation following the worship service. This session was well attended by our congregation and as a result of that discussion it became clear that members wished to become reattached to what was happening in the four denominations on a current basis.

Where we are now:

In 2007 when we began the search for a new minister you made it clear that you wanted to remain multi-denominational rather than become non-denominational. Sharing communion in an

ecumenical way was at the top of your list of customs you wished to continue. The Worship Commission set as a top priority for the Reverend Elizabeth Myers, our interim priest, the return to having a Methodist Sunday, a Presbyterian Sunday, a UCC Sunday and an Episcopal Sunday each month.

Betsy is conscientiously doing that. Some of us haven’t recognized our denomination’s liturgy because we haven’t been in our single denomination church for many years and there have been big changes in the last few years in the liturgy.

We have no intention of giving up being “ecumenical”. We had a Presbyterian minister for 18 years, a Methodist minister for 13 years and two interim and one full time UCC ministers over a 6 year period and we never became a Presbyterian Church or a Methodist Church or a UCC Church. Now that we are entering into our Episcopal Cycle, we will **remain** ecumenical as we did before.

Moving forward:

Council plans to establish a “Mission Statement” for the Church and they will be involving the congregation in that process. If we are to thrive and grow we must quit focusing inwardly on ourselves. We are a community church and our purpose used to be to **serve** the community and spread the Word of Jesus Christ to our friends and neighbors. In the past few months we have begun to do that again through the efforts of the various Commissions and Committees.

We are about to enter the Holiest Season of the year. We hope you will join us in the rest of the Lenten Worship Services and invite you to invite family, friends and neighbors to join us for the several Holy Week Services we will be offering this year. We have a wonderful opportunity to share the Joy of our risen Christ this Easter Season.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for worship, please contact a member of the Worship Commission: Mitzi Yamawaki-chair, Herb and Cindy Hendershot, Bob and Irene Lobell, Wanda Maltese, Jane Nichols, Ron Reece and Betty Schultheis.

Please Honor the Happenings Deadline

Please submit all articles by the 15th 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



Just a reminder that Rev. Elizabeth Myers is with us for a six month period as an interim **part-time** priest. She is with us for eighty hours a month which limits her hours in the office.

If you need to be in touch with Rev. Myers, feel free to call the church office between 8:00 am and 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday and let our Church Administrator know that you would like to speak with the Priest or make an appointment. She will work with Rev. Myers to address your request.

As Rev. Myers, completes her second month with us, it is my hope that your are learning about whit it means to be an Ecumenical Church. She is with us to lead worship and explore our four traditions. As we go on this journeyk it is my hope that you see the many similarities of our founding denominations and appreciate that as a trained Episcopal Priest, Rev. Myers remains very flexible in addressing our concerns to maintain our Ecumenicity.

Evelyn Self
Council Chair

News from the Commissions/Committees

Care and Nurture Commission:

We will have a basket in the Narthex during the month of March to collect new white socks for American troops stationed around the world. Any size, any style white athletic socks for both men and women are needed. They will be given to Operation Jersey Cares to be included in their regular shipments overseas. Thank you for your participation.

Starting around Halloween this year we will be collecting winter coats and jackets for both adults and children. These will be distributed both locally and through the “Warm Coats-Warm Hearts” program sponsored by the Burlington Coat Factory.

Although this notice may seem a bit early, this will give you a chance to store your warm coats away this spring and bring them to church next fall. We ask that they be clean and not missing any buttons. Thank you for your interest and participation.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact Lila Minervino 973-398-6902 or rlminervino@optonline.net

Support Services Commission:

Announcing A Pancake Brunch on Sunday, March 30th in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship. There will be orange juice, blueberry pancakes, regular pancakes, sausage, coffee/tea/milk.



The Stewardship Committee will be preparing the brunch and will ask for a good will offering to go to the “maintenance fund” for Church maintenance and repairs.

Please join us for a tasty meal.

New Eyes for the Needy

Our congregation has been supporting “New Eyes for the Needy” since 2003. To date we have collected more than 172 pairs of eyeglasses and glasses cases. There is a basket in the Narthex in which to place your donation. Also in the basket is a pamphlet which details the work of the organization which collects the glasses from donor organizations and distributes them to needy recipients. Thank you for your continuing support.

Reminder, Reminder, Reminder

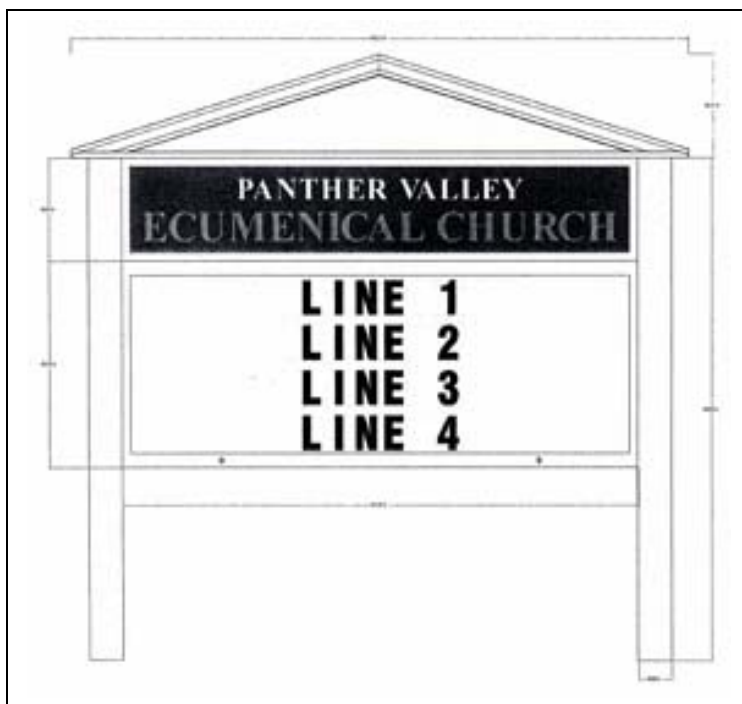
You should be busily feeding your “fishes” that you received at the beginning of Lent. It is amazing how much those little fish tummies can hold. Remember that this year, not only will we be contributing to “One Great Hour of Sharing” we will also be participating in “the Millennium” project.

Speakers from both Stewardship and Christian Outreach will be updating us on a weekly basis. As to potential uses for our much needed funds.

Our New Sign’s Time Has Come

After the congregation voted to change our name it was decided that a new sign was needed in front of the Church. A committee was formed and the search began for the type of sign that would be readable by people driving by the Church and one that could announce events in our Church life.

The committee selected a sign that is similar in size to our current sign, but the one selected will be two sided and lighted from inside. There are four tracks with changeable letters so that current events will be highlighted. (See sketch below.) Council voted at the February meeting to accept the bid from Sign Language of Blirstown.



Although the sign is not included in the 2008 budget, there is a sign fund that has been accruing money for the past year or so and currently has a balance of approximately \$2,600. A total of \$6,000 is needed, so we need to raise another \$3,400. All donations will be appreciated.

I would like to thank the following people for serving on the committee: Pat Billington, Bob Barnes, Janet DiCarlo, Marilyn Schaffer, Maxine Romig Volger, Mitzi Yamawaki and Bob Zinckgraf.

Joan Gibbs

This could be YOUR Ad.

The Stewardship and Communications Committee, publishers of *The Happenings* has decided to sell advertising in all future issues of the newsletter. Rates will be as follows:

- Business card \$12.50
- Quarter page \$25.00
- Half page \$50.00
- Full page \$100.00

We would like to be "advertising" our church and the funds raised through *Happenings* advertising will go into a PVEC advertising account. Any questions? Call Ron Reece at 850-0179 or see him at Church.



Impressions
by Ron
908-850-0179

- We carry a full line of greeting cards: birthday, get well, missing you, sympathy, retirement, wedding, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduation, Romantic, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Personalized cards
- We have note cards for every season
- We specialize in "nature" prints: plain, matted, matted/framed
- Family Photography at it's best

Impressions by Ron
25 Sandpiper Drive
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
ronreece@optonline.net



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E-Mail m.kuehn@verizon.net

Each Office Is Independently Owned And Operated

Mitzi R. Yamawaki
Sales Associate





FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends of Panther Valley Ecumenical Church, It is with joy that I look forward to celebrating our Holy Week and Easter services with you.

On **Maundy Thursday, March 20, we will gather at 7:00 PM** in the Fellowship Hall for an informal and simple supper followed by the Maundy Thursday Liturgy, which will include the foot washing for those who choose to participate and a celebration of the Holy Communion which Jesus instituted at his Last Supper with his disciples. This is a very “family friendly” affair and children are urged to share in this with us.

On **Good Friday, March 21,** there will be two opportunities for worship and reflection.

At 12:00 Noon, at St James’ Episcopal Church on Washington Street in Hackettstown, I, and I hope many of you, will share in the **Ecumenical Community Service** of prayer, song and reading of the Passion of Christ which will be led by clergy from Christian churches in Hackettstown and surrounding areas.

At 7:30 PM, here at Panther Valley, we will celebrate the **Good Friday Service of Tenebrae**, according to the Methodist tradition, together with the **Solemn Intercession from the Good Friday Liturgy** of the Presbyterian Church.

Our Celebration of Easter

Begins with the Great Vigil of Easter on Saturday, March 22, at 7:30 PM. This, the first service of Easter, begins with the Blessing of the new fire and the Lighting of the Paschal Candle and includes the renewal of our

Baptismal Vows and the First Eucharist of Easter. It is thought by many to be the oldest service of the Christian Church and it is certainly one of its most dramatic. This too is a very family friendly service that many children will enjoy.

Our Festival Easter Service, which will include the Holy Communion, will be at **10:00 AM on Sunday, March 23.**

I know that some of you cannot leave homes and hospitals to be with us. We will miss you! Please let the church office know if you would welcome my bringing the Easter communion to you.

Please know that this comes with my prayers that, in and through our worship and the special gatherings of friends and family that this season brings for many among us, we may experience and express in new ways and at new depths the incredible and wonderful love of God which lived among us in Jesus Christ.

In Christ
Betsy.

Please Send Cards and Letters

You may have noticed an empty space in the pew mid-way back on the left hand side of the church...the spot where Janet Wycoff sits. Janet is in Florida until June. She would love to hear from everyone. Her address is:

Janet Wycoff
2331 South West 85th Avenue
Davie, FL 33324

Congratulations!

Can you imagine celebrating 65 years of marriage? Well, that's exactly what Faith and Don Farmer are doing. We think they deserve lots and lots and lots of well-wishes from everyone. And by the way, Don is also celebrating his big 90 Birthday.



It is so great to see a couple continue to be involved in all of the activities of the church. Rarely is there a sign-up sheet out for a covered dish dinner or special program that you don't see their names right at the top of the list. Way to go Don and Faith!

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