

PVEC Happenings



Volume 7, Issue 2

March 2010

THE LORD'S SUPPER, A CHRISTIAN SEDER

By Betty Schultheis

On Palm Sunday, March 28, the Christian Education Commission invites you to participate in a Christian Seder in Fellowship Hall following the 10:00AM Worship Service. Following is an explanation of the Seder:

As Christians, we often celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, which is sometimes referred to as the "Lord's Supper." In most cases, Communion is a symbolic meal. The original Lord's Supper was a full meal, the Passover Seder, which celebrated the freedom from bondage of the Jews in Egypt

The Hebrew word "Seder" means order. The people of Israel were obliged to remember the great saving acts of God on the first night of Pesach (Passover) and to retell the story from generation to generation in a prescribed 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 shall deepen the bonds of love among all God's family.

Following are the symbolic foods served at the Seder:

A Roasted Shankbone: Reminder of sacrificial lamb.

A Roasted Egg: Symbol of the festival sacrifice offered in the Jerusalem temple.

Maror: Bitter herbs (horseradish) are a reminder of the bitterness of the Egyptian slavery.

Haroses: Mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine represents the mortar the Israelite slaves used in Egypt to make bricks, to help build the cities of Pharaoh.

Parsley A sweet herb representing growth and springtime. This is dipped into a dish of salt water before being eaten. The salt water symbolizes tears shed while in slavery.

Three Matzoth: Representing the unleavened bread the Jews took with them when they fled Egypt. It also stands for the three divisions of Israel: Priests, Levites, and Laymen.

Four Cups of Wine: The drinking of wine at four times symbolized the four promises of redemption in Exodus: 6-7: deliverance from bondage, redemption by God's

power, adoption as God's people, and revelation of God as the Lord.

Cup of Elijah: At every Passover Seder an extra cup of wine is poured for the prophet Elijah. During the service the door of the house is opened and the family rises in honor of his symbolic entrance. Elijah is the "invisible guest" at every Seder. His presence represents courage and hope. Greg and Ellen Maddock will serve as our host and hostess. Greg will be reading from the Seder booklet that all participating will receive and Ellen will chant from the Haggadah. The experience will mirror a Jewish Seder meal.

There will be grape juice available as a substitute for wine and we will also have an alternative meat dish available as well as desserts so that everyone will find something to enjoy in their Seder meal. Children are welcome to participate also.

You are welcome to attend even if you did not sign-up. This "educational" activity is back by popular demand. It will be the third time the Christian Education Commission has hosted a Seder.



A Matter of Faith

These are exciting times at Panther Valley Ecumenical Church. As your pastor, I am continually encouraged by your ability as a congregation to thrive even under the strain of a difficult economy, numerous natural disasters, and your own personal struggles.

Yet in spite of all of this, as a congregation you all have put yourselves out there to show how much this church means to you. You've come out in droves for worship, resurrected the hand bell choir, revived the Sunday School program, and committed yourself to the work of leadership. You've even reached out to friends and neighbors and invited, showing your faith in our church's direction. We've begun to look beyond our own walls and actively partnered with other congregations in our community for mission, worship, and outreach. And astonishingly, under great pressure, you took the risk to call me, your pastor, on a full-time contract even though you knew the cost would be a leap of faith in the church's annual budget. On top of that, you've even poured out your generosity to support our hospitality and benevolence to the community more than ever, making personal efforts to give to our food pantry, sponsoring our new backpack program, and reaching out in compassion to the nation of Haiti to the tune of more than \$2000 in gifts.

God has truly blessed this congregation for acting in faith. There is a joy, love, and fellowship in being here with all of you. Whenever a new visitor comes to our congregation, I hear again and again how welcoming you all are as a church. We've torn down walls of isolation and self-preservation that held us back in fear from working together with our neighbors. And God has visibly blessed us too by adding to our number, welcoming new friends and welcoming back friends we've long missed.

For those of you who weathered the struggles this church has gone through in its recent history and stayed faithful, I thank you deeply. I'm not sure if many of you would have had the courage to envision the living and thriving congregation we are today.

Very soon we will be asking you all to give again generously to show your faith on behalf of the future ministry of this church. We're on the verge of entering a significant capital campaign in order to finance a long overdue and critical measure of hospitality for our church: the construction of our exciting new elevator. And we need your help! This building project will not only enable a number of our members to fully participate as truly valued citizens of this church, but it's also

"This building project will not only enable a number of our members to fully participate as truly valued citizens of this church, but it's also an improvement that odds are all of us will benefit from in our lifetime."

an improvement that odds are all of us will benefit from in our lifetime. Further

more, the accessibility of adding an elevator will make our church an even more welcoming place for a great number of people who would like to come to church but who are deterred by the limitations of our current building.

But make no mistake. It won't be cheap. Should we choose to take on this capital campaign, we will likely be continuing to finance the project for about ten years. Is it worth it? If you ask me, it absolutely is. I can't think of a project I would more willingly cast my support. But can we afford it? That's a choice for all of us to decide. The resources are here in our midst. God will provide for us. We serve a trustworthy God. But we need to step out in faith again and trust that God will be there for us all down the line. So, are you coming with me? These are exciting times. - Pastor David Wright

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church Official Newsletter

Panther Valley Ecumenical Church
1490 Rt. 517
PO Box 463
Allamuchy, NJ 07820

Phone: 908-852-5444
Fax: 908-850-4754
Email: office@pvem.net



*"In our diversity we find
common ground in Christ"*

*Visit us on the web at
pvem.net*



WORSHIP COMMISSION NEWS

PVEC to Host Community Easter Sunrise Service

We will be hosting the "Community" Easter Sunday Sunrise Service on April 4th at 6:00 AM at Alumni Field located on Willow Grove Street, north of "Arts Off Main Art Gallery" and south of HRMC in Hack-ettstown. Worship will take place in the sandbar pavilion available there to protect against the weather. We will be serving hot drinks: coffee, tea and hot chocolate along with bagels to those attending. The Worship Commission invites you to begin your Easter Sunday by participating in this service.

No Coffee Hour on Easter

The Worship Commission took a congregational survey to determine whether or not an Easter breakfast or coffee hour should be available on Easter Sunday or if we should not offer anything. The congregation overwhelmingly voted that you preferred not to have anything either before or after the 10:00 AM Worship Service. Many of you wrote comments about having family plans. We thank you for your response.

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.