

WHAT'S UP

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And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day,

attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. *Acts 2: 42-47*

“SAVE THE DATES!! Please save SUNDAYS MAY 7 AND 21, 2023 after worship to participate in our Priorities Process! We will be gathering in small groups to discern the future of St. James for the next couple of years. This will be your opportunity to voice what you believe God is calling St. James to. We will develop a mission statement on May 7, and then on May 21, we will discern where God is calling us in terms of worship, what we want to be as a faith community, and what God wants us to do in the world.

Your consistory and I will be leading these important discussions – your participation is vital, so please mark your calendars! All members and friends are welcome. There will be a make-up date of SUNDAY, JUNE 4 after worship, which Pastor Beth will lead. This is your chance to have your voice heard, which is the beauty of the United Church of Christ.”

Everyone with email received the above notice recently. What is a Priorities Process and why are we doing it?

The Priorities Process is a process I participated in as a member of the United Church of Christ at Valley Forge. At the first session, we broke into small groups and spent some time developing a mission statement. To do that, we had to think about who we thought we were as a congregation. Then, at the next session, we again broke up into small groups and discerned where God was leading us in the above-mentioned categories, keeping our new mission statement in mind –

*In terms of worship (in what ways do we want to enhance our worship experience so that it is more fun and meaningful? Yes, worship should be fun!)

*In terms of being a faith community (in what ways can we become closer?)

*In terms of what God is calling us to in the world (in what ways can we be serving in our communities and in the world?)

CONTACT THE CHURCH

321 South Limerick Rd.
Limerick, PA 19468
610-489-0990
www.stjames-ucc.org

Rev. Beth Eustis
pastor@stjames-ucc.org

Music Director/Organist:
Donna Pinto
music@stjames-ucc.org
(610) 792-1679

Office Assistant:
Sandy Chang
Mon. & Thurs. 1pm-4pm
office@stjames-ucc.org
for Newsletters:
news@stjames-ucc.org

2023 CONSISTORY

Richard Fielder, President
Bob Walters,
V. President
Kristen Serina,
Secretary
Cindy Valerio
Ken Raspen
Jay Smith
Susan Myers
Charlotte Fiedler

Officers:
Tom Mogel, Financial Sec.
Margie Schweitzer,
Historian
Jay Smith, Treasurer

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CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

(continued from page 1)

The answers that came up were compiled by the pastor and then the congregation voted on the top three answers for each category, which were then divided and assigned to the appropriate committee. For example, I was chair of Worship Committee at the time, and one of the priorities that came up was "Engage youth in worship more." And our committee, together with the pastor and with God's help, found ways to do that.

What I thought was really great about this was that each and every member of the congregation had the opportunity to have their voices heard. The priorities that we discerned helped our congregation to grow, spiritually and in numbers. Five or six years later, we did the process again, because many of the newer folks were not around the first time.

So why do this Priorities Process for St. James? Because now that your settled pastor has arrived, and Covid has settled down (knock wood!) and we have started to bring back certain committees and activities, it's time to discern where God could be calling us in the next couple of years. Please pray for this process, and for your consistory, and for me, as we discern where God is calling us. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. See you after worship on May 7 and 21!
Blessings for the future of St. James,
Pastor Beth

POTLUCK DINNER



We will not be having a potluck dinner in April so families can celebrate the Easter weekend.

Our next potluck dinner will be on May 13 at 5:00.

WANTED: RECIPES

Women's fellowship is doing a fundraiser to develop a cookbook with the church member's recipes. The cookbook will include your favorite recipes for beverages, appetizers, main dishes, side dishes, desserts, cookies, and any other foods.

The plan is have the cookbook ready for the 2023 holiday gift giving season.

We have started collecting recipes now through July.

In late summer and fall we will plan to assemble the cookbook in time for the holiday season.

Please bring your recipes to the church and drop off in the designated box in the Narthex or email the recipes to Linda Kramer at Lindy13QARA@msn.com.

If you have any questions or would like to assist with the cookbook, please contact Kristen Serina or Linda Kramer.

SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

April 22, from 8am to 1pm. Donations needed, they can be placed in the Sunday school room on the left going up the hallway from church. There is a sign on the door for RUMMAGE SALE ITEMS. No computers, TV's or mattresses. Linda Bevans' is taking care of the jewelry which is a big money maker. Costume jewelry is a big hit!! Earrings, pins, necklaces and bracelets, we take them all!! Seasonal items are a big mover and gently used clothes for men and women and children. From flower pots to cooking pots we need it!!! If you need help getting your items to the church feel free to call me and I would be glad to pick them up. Cindy Valerio 610-792-2946.



PRAYER CONCERNS

For our friends Betty Himes, Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Sang Hi Crater, Joan Rosen *and others who are in long term care or unable to leave their homes. We pray for comfort, peace, healing, and companionship for each of them.*

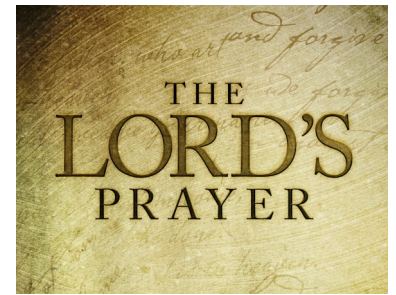
For our friends Van S, Michelle, Ken, Betsy R, Sue J, Charlotte F, Bobbie T, Paul M, Chet M, Dottie, Bonnie, BJ, Diane, Ric F, Sharon R, Linda S, John K, Jessica, Tabby, Karen, George N, Marianne K, Karen, Carl H, Phil, Nancy B, Ginny, Patricia S, Dodie S, Ralph B, Carol T, Kork M, Don G, Fran D *and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

For our friends Fred R, Joan R, Marees R, Barb, Brian, Cathy M, Buck, Linda F, Baby Rose *and others with ongoing health concerns and challenging life of God's presence through the support of our congregation.*

Prayers for all veterans that are still suffering from PTSD and all other side effects from their service in the military.

Lord there is so much hurt and suffering in our world; we pray that we can someday see peace without wars and suffering. There are many that we ask prayers for healing, and we will continue to pray for those that continue to deal with health issues and illness. We thank you for the healing that you have given many. We pray for peace and comfort for those that have lost loved ones, that they feel your presence with them. We pray for wholeness of mind, body and spirit upon us all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please note that we will remove names on the prayer list after one month, except for homebound and hospitalized members. Let us know if you would like to add or renew a request by office phone or email.



PRAYING FOR ST. JAMES MEMBERS

Initiated by St. James Prayer Team, each Sunday two church families are being included in the Sunday worship prayer time. You are invited to include these members and their families in your prayers throughout that week.

April

2 *Margaret Schweitzer
Donna Serina*

9 *Kristen Serina
Michael, Keira and Hannah
Serina*

16 *Jay and Gail Smith
Clinton Starkey*

23 *Michael and Michele Terbush
James and Cynthia Valerio*

30 *Robert and Laura Walters
Lillian Weidner*

CALENDAR

April 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Men's Breakfast 8:30am
2 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	3 Boy Scouts 7pm	4 G/P Women's Bible Study 7pm	5 G/P Men's Bible 12-2pm	6 G/P Session 7-10pm	7 Good Friday Service 7:00pm	8
9 NO Bible Study 9am Easter Worship service 10:15am (communion)	10 Boy Scouts 7pm Pastor Beth will be on vacation on April 10—17.	11	12 Blood Drive 1-7pm G/P Men's Bible 12-2pm	13	14	15
16 NO Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	17 Boy Scouts 7pm	18 G/P Women's Bible Study 7pm	19 Midweek Study 11am G/P Men's Bible 12-2pm	20 G/P Session 7-10pm	21	22 Rummage Sale 8-1pm
Cindy Valerio will deliver the message.			4/19 Consistory 7:00 pm			
23 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am	24 Boy Scouts 7pm	25 PSEC 9:30 2:15pm 4/25 Feeding homeless at Trinity UCC 3:30 AA District meeting 7pm	26 G/P Men's Bible 12-2pm	27	28	29
30 Bible Study 9am Worship service 10:15am			Midweek Study 11am			

CONFERENCE & LOCAL NEWS

THE INVASION OF UKRAINE AND WHO YOU'VE IMPACTED

February 20, 2023

One year ago, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the CWS community joined forces to do our part in supporting Ukrainians. In the last year, so many of you have stepped up to do one of the things that the CWS family does best: surround people who have lost their homes in a big hug of love and support (and supplies, resources, services and so much more). You have been a helping hand to so many of our Ukrainian neighbors in ways big and small. Today, as we look back at a year of welcome and generosity, we wanted to reflect on exactly who it is you've reached.

Thanks to your unified support...



Mothers like Julia and their children rediscovered simple joys: at the very beginning of the war, we were able to install a brand new kitchen in a Refugee Accommodation Center where multiple Ukrainian Families were residing. Thanks to

this donation, RAC guests like Julia and her sons were able to have some of their favorite treats like omelets and pancakes! These warm meals are giving families a sense of home and comfort.

Our next generation is pursuing their dreams: When 13-year-old Mark was forced to leave his home-and his father-behind in Ukraine, he became a responsible young man who wanted to care for his family. One of the goals was to use his art skills to buy his mom a present for her birthday. Through our education center in Moldova, Mark began taking art lessons that allowed him to achieve his goals and release the stresses caused by the war. Thanks to your support, we were able to gift Mark a brand new art kit and are helping him support his mom while providing the freedom to have fun and just be a child.

Roma communities have not been left behind: when Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes, we made

sure the doors to safety were open to *all* Ukrainians. With your donations, we developed a brand new program so that Ukrainian Roma families could count on us for help adjusting to their new communities. Our program continues to advocate for this community and ensure they get access to the same resources and support as other Ukrainians.

Families like Vitalina and her son received the gift of language: When Vitalina and her son moved to Moldova, they struggled to start their new lives due to language barriers. With your help, we enrolled both Vitalina and her son in language classes. Now Vitalina is more confident in her community and her son can learn freely at school.

Moldovan communities received a big energy boost: Through your generosity, we were able to install solar panels in a RAC and the homes of many Moldovan families. We were also able to gift livestock to the families in the program to give them an additional source of income. This allows Moldovans to stay warm and keep their doors open to Ukrainian families that are in search of a new home.

Parents like Viktorija and their children can feel more at home: From the start, we have been working with our local partner Diaconia, to develop ways to welcome their new Ukrainian neighbors. With your help, Diaconia continues to provide comfort to Ukrainian families like Viktorija and her sons.

Children maintained their right to education, safety and fun: With your help, we supported our partner Diaconia in establishing an education center for Ukrainian children. At this center, children can work on their school work, make new friends and enjoy what it truly means to be a kid. Together, we were also able to spread the fun through our fun bus!

When Moldova's newest community members first arrived, the Fun Bus brought games, educational activities and lots of joy to children residing in Refugee Accommodation Centers.

We invite you to continue joining us in our work and inspiring hope by donating.

Significant support for this project was provided by a grant from UMCOR.

CONFERENCE & LOCAL NEWS (continued)

CHURCH WORLD

Church World Service recently published their annual report. It gives us an idea in real numbers how their work impacts around the world.

35,435 Blankets
 49,900 hygiene kits
 8310 school kits
 2208 cleanup buckets
 407 Welcome backpacks

Helped 74,120 refugees and immigrants outside the US as they searched to find peace and a sense of home.

Church World Service helped 70,185 people participate in disaster response and recovery programs.

14,000 volunteers stepped up to help with CWS programs. 7,644 Afghans this year were welcomed. 4,030 people that you helped to improve their diets and nutrition. CROP Hunger Walks have supported 1,000 food banks, soup kitchens, pantries and shelters throughout the US.

Truly the hands and feet of Jesus!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

(Part of a Newsletter Article from another church)
 Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Now what do we do? Our Lenten Journey is over. We traveled to the upper room on Maundy Thursday with Jesus and his disciples. We heard Jesus say those powerful, effective words that are still effective when we hear them on Sunday mornings, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins" (Mt 26:28). We traveled to the foot of the cross on Good Friday and heard Jesus utter a lonely cry of abandonment, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Mk 15:34)? We heard the words of finality that Jesus spoke with his last breath, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30), paying in full the price for our Sin that separates us from God. And we traveled to the empty tomb to hear again about the group of women that traveled there early on the first day of the week to find it empty. We heard once more the words of the angels at the empty tomb, "He is not here, but has risen" (Lk 24:6). The final, culminating Day of the Resurrection is over. Now what do we do?

So *where* do we go once we leave the empty tomb? Let us follow the example of Jesus' first disciples. After Jesus walked through locked doors to appear to the eleven disciples and to show himself to Thomas, seven of the eleven disciples went back to their fishing business (Jn 21:1-14). They went back to their vocations or stations in life and took the witness of the resurrection with them. They lived in the joy of the resurrection of Jesus while carrying out the daily, ordinary labor and responsibilities given to them.

(submitted by Charlotte Fiedler)

CONFERENCE & LOCAL NEWS (continued)

**The Wayne Oratorio Society
Presents
Beethoven: Mass in C (1807)
and
Will Todd: Mass in Blue (2003)
April 22 and 23, 7:30PM**

These two works for choir, orchestra, and jazz ensemble use the same text, the Mass Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei) but fashion the music in completely different and intriguing ways. The first work is Beethoven's revolutionary Mass in C, composed in 1807. This was his first attempt to write a piece of sacred music and one of his most dynamic and inspiring compositions. The second work for this concert is Will Todd's Mass in Blue composed in 2003. Todd seamlessly weaves together the musical duality of his world – he's an accomplished jazz pianist/composer but also writes using a post-modern classical choral language. While the instrumentation and choral writing are rooted in jazz harmony and rhythm, the choir and soprano soloist perform largely with traditional classical tone. This pairing allows both musicians and audiences to discover how these two very different settings of the same text equate to parallel expressions/feelings of reverence, joy, and spirituality for both the performers and listeners. Between them, Todd and Beethoven have delighted hundreds of thousands of concert goers. They are sure to do the same once again, April 22 and 23, 2023 with John Grecia conducting the 100+ member Choir, Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble. The concert is free. Your donations and free will offering benefit this concert and future concerts by The Wayne Oratorio Society.



LENT/HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Wednesday's—Midweek Study—1 pm on *Just Mercy*

Sunday, April 2nd—Palm Sunday—10:15am

Friday, April 7th—Good Friday Service in Sanctuary—7:00pm

Sunday, April 9th—Easter Sunday Service 10:15am

All Are Welcome! Invite your friends and family!

St. James United Church of Christ
321 South Limerick Road
Limerick, PA 19468

April 2023 2022 NEWSLETTER

Notes & Reminders

Materials for the May Newsletter are due on April 20th, 2023.

PROJECT OUTREACH

Donations are needed toiletries, canned potatoes, canned peas, tomatoes, baked beans, pasta meals, paper towels, and toilet paper. Please put donations in the shopping cart and they will be delivered to the distribution center.



APRIL

Birthday

1....Cody Clarke
2....Bob Walters
8....Kristen Serina
12....Diane Phelen
17....Melissa Moore
18....James Friemann
29....Stacy Bosi
30....Sarah Alexander

Anniversary

17....Russell & Barbara
Brightbill
21....Paul & Betty Meyers
34....Jay & Gail Smith



Congratulations and best wishes
from your church family!