



# The St. Paul Epistle

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Bellville, Ohio

May, 2010

## What's Happening!

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## First Communion

First Communion will be celebrated on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at both the 8:15 and 10:30 worship. The following children suffered through five classes with Pastor Doug to prepare for their First Communion.

Darian Gottfried  
Meghan Hadley  
Grant Hadley  
Brian Harding  
Owen Harsch  
Paige Hicks  
Brooke Hursh  
Morgan Klenk  
Sam Sharp  
Kilee Stoner  
Molly Strickling  
Shelby Tedrow  
Alyson Wend  
Seth Wilson  
Brienne Worner  
Ethan Zimmerman

## Bible Study

*What's So Amazing about Grace?* Come and discuss this topic on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. beginning May 10<sup>th</sup>. Interested in attending or have questions? Contact Janis Marhenke, 419-524-8432.

## Confirmation

On Sunday, May 23, the following young people will be confirmed:

Jonah Albert  
MacKenzie Golden  
Jack Harsch  
Caroline Parnisari  
Jenna Schaefer  
Grant Sprang  
Meghan Strickling

The confirmands have been studying the life of Jesus and the basic teachings of the church for the past two years. Now they are ready to promise that they will enter into full participation in a life lived in relationship with God and with the people of God. The confirmands will speak their vows at either of the two worship services, normally at whichever one they attend. A reception for them will be held at 9:30 in the Community room.

## Seniors Graduating

Congratulations to our seniors who are graduating from high school this year. We will be recognizing them at both Sunday morning worship services on May 30<sup>th</sup>. A reception for them will be at 9:30 in the Community Room. The seniors are:

Steven Broeske - *Clear Fork*  
Erica Garn - *Clear Fork*  
Tiffany Johnson - *Lexington/Pioneer*  
Sarah Laux - *Clear Fork*  
Wyatt Rose - *Lexington*

## Vacation Bible School

We are collecting empty paper towel tubes, saran rap tubes, tin foil tubes and empty water bottles. Please put them in the Community Chest.

## Community Dinner Needs Supplies

Our cupboards are bare!! We could use your help in replenishing the applesauce, spaghetti noodles and spaghetti sauce at this time. Please put your donations in the kitchen.

## Gift of the Month Support our Troops

We would like to send care packages to our military men and women especially those within our congregation including Buck Barr, Mike Ammons, and Tyler Owens, son-in-law of Steve and Elaine Dotson.

You may donate items from the list below: word search and puzzle books, single use cameras, stationary **with stamps**, phone cards, disposable razors, foot powder, microwave popcorn, jerky, gum, trail mix, sunflower seeds, **individual** flavor packets for drinks such as *Propel*. **NO** chocolate please, but we may send hard candy.

If you know of any man or woman that is in the armed forces let Pam Hartley or Deb Bing know.

## Celebrate with the Frontzs

Sunday you are invited to an Open House on from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. to help Janet and Paul Frontz celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. The celebration will be held in the Community Room.

## Scholarship Sunday

This year marks the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the St. Paul Lutheran Scholarship Fund. The Fund was started with an initial gift of \$5,800.00 from the Lutheran Church Men (LCM). The Fund has grown through the years to over \$30,000 and has provided scholarship to 71 recipients over those years.

The eligibility requirements for the scholarship are as follows:

1. Be an active member of St. Paul.
2. Have made a contribution of record and/or communed each of the previous two years.
3. Be enrolled in an accredited institution of higher learning.
4. Be in under graduate studies.
5. Receive the scholarship only once.

The scholarship is available to a person of any age who is enrolled in any year of under-graduate studies. The amount of the scholarship is at least \$200 or an amount determined by the Endowment Committee. It is the committee's goal and desire to continue to grow this fund so we can raise that minimum scholarship amount.

The second Sunday in May has been designated as **Scholarship Awareness Sunday**. This year that Sunday is May 9<sup>th</sup>. There is a special envelope in your offering book for a gift specifically for the fund. All gifts will go directly to the St. Paul Lutheran Scholarship Fund that is being managed by the ELCA Foundation. I also encourage you to give to this fund on a regular basis. The more we can build this fund, the greater the amount of scholarship money we can award. For more information about how you can support this fund please contact Steve Leedy (419- 886-4266), Jeff Brooks (740-392-4652), Paul Martin (419-886-4420), or Kathy Frank (740-694-6485).

## New Baby

Aubryn Lee Nickoli was born March 30<sup>th</sup> to Sarah (Lantz) & Matt Nickoli. She weighed 6 pounds and 6 oz. and was 19 ½ inches long. She is the granddaughter of Gary and Cheryl Lantz.

## Celebrate Mother's Day at Camp Mowana

Celebrate Mother's Day this year in the Fleming Falls Retreat Center at Camp Mowana. A full brunch will be served in our comfortable lodge, appropriately decorated for this special day! Seating will be at 12:15 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. This year enjoy a relaxing brunch in the beautiful surroundings of Camp Mowana! Prices: Adults (10 and over) - \$12.50; Ages 5 - 10 - \$6.50; 4 and under are free. By reservation only. Call Mowana at 419-589-7406.

## Financial Report

General Fund	
Income to date	\$51,726.16
Expenses to date	\$55,951.70
Budget to date	\$60,254.25
Building Fund	
Income to date	\$20,591.00
Expenses to date	\$13,514.05
Principal Balances 3/31/10	
Original Loan	\$342,936.54
Parking Lot	\$53,957.19

## Synod Assembly

The Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly meets all day Friday, May 15 and Saturday, morning May 16. Representing St. Paul Lutheran Church are Chris Laux and Lisa Brooks, as our lay delegates, Pastor Doug Pretorius as a clergy delegate, and Marilyn Baker as a member of the synod council. It is at this time that the synod elects the synod council, the representatives to the national assembly which will be held in August 2010, members of other synodical committees, and also votes on motions that come from the floor.

## Thank You Notes Received

St. Paul Lutheran Church,

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers and cards during my recent illness. Your love and caring at this time is very comforting. May God bless you.

With Love in Christ,  
Vicki Hull

*Dear Pastor, Church Council, and Congregational members,*

*Thank you for your 2009 gift. We appreciate your annual financial and prayerful support for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio.*

*Your support is of great value as we continue to provide quality Christ-centered programs through Camp Mowana, Lutheran Memorial Camp, Camp Luther and LOMO Outreach. Our mission is to Bring people together to experience Christ through our natural settings and programs.*

*Please accept our gratitude for your congregation's gift to LOMO during 2009.*

*Sincerely in Christ,  
Penny Christensen  
Executive Director*

## Meet New Staff Person

The Guardians have hired a new Child Ministry Coordinator to work 20 hours per week starting July 4. The person is currently serving a congregation and will be resigning on May 15. On March 16 the name of the person will be released to our congregation, and on Sunday evening May 23 there will be a **Meet & Greet** at 7:00 in the Community Room. This will be an opportunity for you to meet our new staff person. The Hire Team and the Guardians are enthusiastic about this person and anticipate that it will be a good fit for us.

## Lutheran Malaria Initiative

The NEOS Global Mission / Companion Synod Committee has adopted the Lutheran Malaria Initiative as the focus of the committee's work in 2010 and 2011. Offerings at our upcoming synod assembly have been designated in support of this initiative. Congregations of the synod are encouraged to receive special offerings to be brought by voting members to assembly. Therefore St. Paul Lutheran Church will be receiving a special offering for this cause on the first two Sundays in May. This will be brought to the assembly Eucharist on Friday afternoon, May 15.

The Lutheran Malaria Initiative is an unprecedented collaborative effort among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Lutheran World Relief to mobilize the nearly eight million Lutherans in the United States to join the battle against malaria --a preventable and treatable disease that kills more than one million people a year.

## Baptisms

The following persons were baptized at the 10:30 Rejoice! Worship Service on April 11:



Above, Left: **Samantha Stoner, Kilee & Seth Stoner**, children of Brian & Samantha Stoner



Above, Right: **Paige Hicks**, daughter of Jim & Denise Hicks

Below, Left: **Valerie Golden**, daughter of Chuck & Judy Golden

Below, Right: **Tiffany Johnson**, daughter of Tim & Tammy Johnson, sponsored by Gale & Sue Kanz



## Library News

St. Paul Lutheran Church library is now a member of the National Church Library Association, which provides book reviews, guidelines for managing this resource, and information about what NCLA members are doing across the nation. From *A Handbook for Church Librarians*: "Church libraries provide a venue for Christian service to those who love books, ideas and learning. They see providing books and other materials to congregation members as a meaningful and enjoyable way to serve God by helping others grow in their spiritual life and service. Their like interests and common purpose knit them together into close and supportive groups. Together they can effectively advance the ministry of their congregation."

Books recently donated to our library:

- ***The Book of Daily Prayer Morning and Evening 2004***, edited by Kim Martin Sadler;
- ***Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Physical and Spiritual Well Being***, by Andrew Weil, M.D.;
- ***Imagine Your Life Without Fear: An Inspirational Message for Today***, by Max Lucado;
- ***My Descent into Death-A Second Chance at Life***, by Howard Smith;
- ***Three Cups of Tea***, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.
- For children: A 3-CD set, ***123 Favorite Christmas Songs: A Musical Collection of Children's Favorite Christmas Songs***.

The library team is interested in your suggestions, requests and ideas. What materials would you expect and hope to find in our library? Carol Laser 419-886-3340; Nancy Bletner 419-886-2914; Joan Echelberger 419-886-2433; Judy Harding 419-883-2433.

## The People of the Holy Land: Then and Now

A 17 day cross-cultural immersion and spiritual retreat in Israel and Palestine, January 9-25, 2011, offered by Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Lead by faculty members: The Rev. Dr. Monte Luker, Professor of Hebrew Scriptures who has lived and studied in the Holy Land for 30 years and Dr. Bobby Morris who has studied and taught in the Middle East for 10 years.

In addition to the biblical sites from Mount Hermon in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, the group will meet with Dr. Mitri Raheb of the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Pastor Mark Brown, head of LWF staff of Augusta Victoria Hospital, the pastors of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jerusalem, Archbishop Elias Chacour of the Galilee, as well as Druze villagers in the Golan, Jewish settlers and kibbutzniks.

Tour is for seminarians, pastors, lay professionals and lay persons. This annual tour fills quickly, is very inclusive, and an exceptional cost value. Deadlines are approaching soon. For information on costs and deadlines contact Dr. Monte Luker at 803-719-2057 or e-mail at: luker@mac.com.

*(Pastor Doug's mentor, Pastor Clyde McGee and his wife Peggy, went on this tour two years ago. Pastor McGee has been to Israel numerous times, and he said that this was "the best and most insightful tour I have ever taken. I learned more on this than on any other." Peggy said, "And it was clear and understandable for me too, even though I am a lay person.")*



## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

From the April 2010 *National Geographic Special Issue Water: Our Thirsty World*  
**“The amount of moisture on Earth has not changed. The water the dinosaurs drank millions of years ago is the same water that falls as rain today. But will there be enough for a more crowded world? “**

- Nearly 70 percent of the world's fresh water is locked in ice. Most of the rest is in aquifers that we're draining much more quickly than the natural recharge rate. Two-thirds of our water is used to grow food. With 83 million more people on earth each year, water demand will keep going up unless we change how we use it.
- One out of eight people lacks access to clean water. 3.3 million die from water-related health problems each year. Washing hands with soap can reduce diarrheal disease by 45 percent. An eradication campaign that includes a simple water filter has cut the number of guinea worm cases by 99.9 percent since 1986.
- The weight of China's three gorges reservoir will tilt the earth's axis by nearly an inch. The longest water tunnel, supplying New York City, is 85 miles and leaks up to 35 million gallons a day. The Itaipu dam in South America cost \$18 billion and took 17 years to build. Dam projects have displaced up to 80 million people worldwide.
- U.S. vacationers rank going to the beach or lake as their favorite outdoor activity. More Americans fish than play golf or tennis. The U.S. Recreational boating industry generated \$33.6 billion in 2008. In Florida, 3,000 gallons are used to water the grass for each golf game played. U.S. swimming pools lose 150 billion gallons to evaporation every year.
- A thousand years ago, less than 120 miles from modern-day Santa Fe, the inhabitants of Chaco Canyon built rock-lined ditches, headgates, and dams to manage runoff from their enormous watershed. Then starting around A.D. 1130, a prolonged drought set in. Water scarcity may not have been the only cause, but within a few decades, Chaco Canyon had been abandoned. We hardly need reminding that nature can be unforgiving: We learn to live within her increasingly unpredictable means, we move elsewhere, or we perish.



Elijanie Mdivanian was baptized on March 7, 2010.

She is the daughter of Tigran & Becky (Wade) Mdivanian.

## Worship Services for May

### May 2      5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion / First Communion / 8:15 Baptism / Temple Talk on Endowment  
 Acts 11:1-18      Psalm 148      John 13:31-35

#### God Comes

God comes where we cannot go. God goes where we cannot come. God comes to sixteen young people today when they receive their First Communion. God comes to Gunnar when he is baptized today.

### May 9      6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Children's Sermon / Mother's Day Blessing / Holy Communion  
 Acts 16:9-15      Psalm 67      Rev. 21:10, 22-22:5      John 14:23-29

#### When Women Open their Hearts

The gospel came to Europe and the Western World when Paul had a vision in the night that a European man was calling for him to "Come over and help us." So Paul left the Asia and the east and traveled to the west. The first convert, however, was not a man, but a woman named Lydia. Her conversion was the beginning of the transformation of the world.

### May 16      7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion  
 Acts 16:16-34      Psalm 97      Rev. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21      John 17:20-26

#### When Prisoners Sing

Paul and Silas were flogged and thrown into prison for freeing a tormented slave from the evil spirit which afflicted her. Instead of moaning and groaning in the dark of their cell, they were singing praises to God. Praise transforms every prison.

### May 23      Day of Pentecost

Confirmation  
 Acts 2:1-21      Psalm 104:24-35b      Romans 8:12-17      John 14:8-17

#### Cry Abba

On this day of Pentecost when we remember that Father gave the church the Holy Spirit, we will confirm seven young people and pray that Father will give the Holy Spirit to them. It is our prayer that they will turn to him every day of their lives, speak God's name, and say, "Pappa. Daddy."

### May 30      Holy Trinity Sunday

Honor Graduates / Memorial Day Blessing / Children's Choir  
 Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31      Psalm 8      Romans 5:1-5      John 16:12-15

#### Greet Wisdom

One of the mysteries of the Christian faith is that we believe two statements are true:

- God is one, being whole and complete, without division or separation.
- God is three persons - Father, Jesus, Spirit - each separate from the other.

On this Sunday in which we honor our graduates and invite them to go out into the world to live in God, live through God, and bring God to the world. We send them out in the fullness of the Trinity, for it is only in the completeness of the divine being that any one of us can live lives that are whole, full and complete.



**PASTOR'S LETTER**     April 28, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters In Christ,

Grace to you and peace from Father, Jesus, and Spirit.

Much has been happening in April and more will be happening in May. Probably the biggest change is that the Guardians and the Hire Team have hired a new Child Ministry Coordinator. This person has amazing gifts and talents, has great spiritual depth and insight, and an extensive career working in the church in various capacities. I am excited about working together and believe that you will be greatly blessed too. My only regret is that I cannot tell you who it is until May 16<sup>th</sup>, and I hope that you will be able to come to the **Meet and Greet** on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00.

We are pleased that Paige Hicks, Valerie Golden, Tiffany Johnson, and Samantha, Kilee, and Seth Stoner were baptized on April 11, and we are looking forward to Gunnar Dill's baptism on May 2. In addition, we have some fifteen others who are interested in joining our congregation, or who are at least exploring that option by planning on attending the event **Get to Know God's Family at St. Paul Lutheran Church**, on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

On Saturday evening April 24<sup>th</sup> we had representatives from twelve service agencies and eight churches gather to meet each other, to describe how they were meeting the needs of the community, and to list the unmet needs of the community. A meal was served to 64 people by our church and volunteers from the BNOC and the Presbyterian Church. It was helpful to have the community leaders gather to hear of their work and share ideas. This was made possible by your generous use of the facilities, my time and Barb's time.

This beginning of mutual cooperation was slightly overshadowed - for me - by the news that day that the synod council had released First English Lutheran Church from the ELCA. That was the final step for them to separate. They are concerned about the direction of the ELCA, about the authority of the Scriptures and the importance of clarity and responsibility in sexual relationships. Although I concur with their concerns I have come to different conclusions, and it saddens me to see the brokenness of the church. In a few weeks we will hear Jesus' prayer, "May they all be one." Even so may it come quickly.

As always in May we look forward to confirmation - seven this year - and to honoring the graduates. In addition, because of the discussion about a possible new way of doing first communion, we will be having sixteen fourth and fifth graders receiving their first communion on Sunday May 2.

These all are part of the Spirit's work in our midst. I pray that you have been experiencing the Spirit's work in your journey of faith whether it be through the valley of the shadow of death or ascension mountain. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Peace,  
Pastor Doug

## **WOMEN OF ELCA NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Intergenerational Charity Project Warms Hearts—and Bodies**

by Terri Lackey

Neither rain, nor mudslides, nor wrecks on Los Angeles freeways could keep nearly 60 participants from attending the third annual Project Linus event in North Hollywood, Calif., on a chilly February day.

Sponsored jointly by the Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) and the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO), the event is an opportunity for intergenerational charity-making. Despite the rain and congested highways, women and teens showed up at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in North Hollywood and made 74 blankets—one more than they made in 2009.

"February is love month and today is an agape day, a charity day when we will make blankets for children we do not know," Sonja Demeter, an SWO board member from Santa Maria, Calif., said in an opening devotional that morning. "But they are God's children, and God loves them."

Project Linus is non-profit organization based in Bloomington, Ill., whose purpose is to provide, through hand-made blankets or afghans, "love, a sense of security, warmth, and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need," according to the organization's Web site. More than 3 million blankets have been delivered to children since the project began in 1995.

The Southwest California project started three years ago at the urging of the youth, said Courtney Bassler, a member of Emmanuel and synod council youth representative and synod LYO board member. The Southwest California SWO gives money to LYO annual convocations to help pay for speakers.

"So we wanted to have a better relationship with the SWO board," said Bassler, a freshman at Los Angeles Valley College. "We didn't just want them to shell out money to us and that be it." Bassler said she feels like this is an opportunity for young girls to meet women on the SWO board and to become partners with Women of the ELCA. "It's a good way to encourage young women to be leaders. Being on the LYO board has literally changed my life."

Dianne Tillman, president of the Southwest California SWO, said when she first began serving as president, the churchwide organization in Chicago encouraged her and other presidents to do something with youth. Not long after that, she received a call from LYO advisor Shannon Savage-Howe asking about participating in a joint project. "We needed something we could do in one day that didn't really involve sewing with machines," Tillman said. That's when someone discovered Project Linus and the no-sew blanket patterns on their Web site ([www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org)). "We just needed an easy way to get together with the youth, and this was a great way to do that," she said.

In its first year, the project was held at Tillman's church, St. Stephens in Granada Hills. Sixty people made 86 blankets. The second year, the project took place at Olivet Lutheran Church in Hawthorne, and about 84 people made 73 blankets. Tillman hopes the project will see a fourth year. She rotates off the board in October and is unsure if a new president will continue this new tradition.

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**WOMEN OF ELCA NATIONAL NEWS****Katie's Fund**

The Katie's Fund endowment was established several years ago to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the women's organization. The principal generates interest income for the support of Women of the ELCA ministries in the areas of global sharing, living theology and leadership development.

Women of the ELCA has encouraged global sharing through various conferences and justice gatherings. Last fall, through support from Katie's Fund, several participants attended a global ecumenical forum in Washington, D.C., on human trafficking, slavery and unequal food distribution. Whether you have been involved in the women's organization for a long time or are just getting to know our work, you know that these issues are core to our justice and advocacy ministries.

With the support of Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA participants were able to partner with other Lutheran women from around the world during this forum, sharing their work and mission with one another. Discussing these critical issues of human trafficking and slavery is evidence that we are actively living out our Purpose Statement, which calls on us to promote healing and wholeness in our church, society and world. As the Reverend Mary Finklea, who attended the global forum with our financial support, wrote following the experience, "All of us, made in God's image, share each other's burdens. So when my sister is in trouble, I'm in trouble. And when my sister celebrates, guess what—I do, too!"

We need to continue to reach out to our sisters here and around the world, to enliven and nourish our community of women that supports one other in friendship and faith and encourages one another to be stewards, disciples and leaders of this church.

Thank you Katie's Fund!

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### **Ministry Leaders Meeting on April 6, 2010**

The Ministry Leaders met on Tuesday night, April 6, 1020. Present were Pastor Dog, Jeff Hammett, Marilyn Baker, Janis Marhenke and Ruth Lindsey. Absent were Barb Hoover and Dawn Armstrong.

Marilyn Baker led us in devotions.

The group then spent considerable time discussing the new staff person, the questions we wanted to ask at the interview, and how we might better handle the communication between the staff, and the leaders, and the Guardians.

Ruth Lindsey gave a report on the Agape Feast and the Easter breakfast.

Jeff Hammett announced that he will not run for re-election at the end of his term at the end of the year. Further discussion about when each term ends. Janis has just started her 3 year term. Ruth and Marilyn are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their second three year term.

Jeff suggested we devise some means to do an inventory of all our building contents in case of fire. We discussed the AED Device and the source of money to fund it. We will not purchase it until we have the funding.

Our next meeting will June 10 at 7:00. This is a joint meeting of the Ministry Leaders and the Guardians.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Doug Pretorius

## May Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

1 Emily Fry	8 Connie Millard	19 Taylor Richmond
1 Sarah Laux	8 Jeremy Price	22 Josie Pipes
4 Lance Dill	9 Drew Dill	24 Mike Bing
4 Jolie McCue	10 Kayla Jung	25 Julie Wade
5 Andrew Pretorius	12 Heather Richmond	25 Melissa White
5 Justin Fellure	14 Kurt Beal	27 Jill Schaefer
6 Judy Bly	16 Kaylin Helinski	27 Andy Dill
7 Pam Hartley	17 Daniel Boone	29 Mike Hoover
7 Allyson Leedy	18 Terry Weaver	29 Norman Beal
8 Naomi Baker	19 Richard Brokaw	30 Mark Timberlake

May 1, 1982	Randy & Michelle Golden
May 4, 1979	Brian & Cheryl Wade
May 6, 1978	Mike & Barbara Hoover
May 10, 2003	Brent & Melissa White
May 11, 1974	Rick & Connie Millard
May 24, 1997	Kit & Aggie Branham
May 25, 1985	Amos & Beth Fry
May 25, 1963	Tom & Nancy Barr
May 25, 1996	Jeff & Kerri Gottfried
May 25, 2003	Carl & Barbara Noblet

## Please Pray for and Remember Our Shut-Ins

Please remember people in our congregation who have not been able to worship with us. Your cards, letters, and visits give them much joy. It is important that we help them remember they are part of our church family.

**Country Meadow Care Center**  
 4910 Algire Rd., Bellville, OH 44813  
 Ruth McKinnon, Ed Mazur

**Homebound Church Family:**  
 Rubert Hill, Marsades Mast

**Winchester Terrace Nursing Home**  
 70 Winchester Rd., Mansfield, OH 44907  
 Marilyn Au

If you know of someone who needs added to the list, please contact the church office at 419-886-3521.

## Enrich Your Summer: Be a Host Family

Just as this newsletter was going to press, Pastor Doug received word from Lutheran Memorial Camp that they will be having four international students who will be here for the summer. They could use host families who will help out with them.

The responsibilities of the host family are to pick them up on Friday evening at Lutheran Memorial Camp (about 25 minutes away, south of Mount Gilead) and return them by noon on Sunday morning. Last year we sometimes had different people pick them up or return them. The students may or may not want to do anything. They might want to do laundry and relax. Or, the energetic ones would enjoy a day of sightseeing on Saturday. It is hard to know beforehand their personalities or needs.

This year they are:

- **Adele Croucher** (age 19), from New Zealand, arriving June 3, loves music/singing.
- **Juan Pablo** (20), from Columbia, likes soccer.
- **Aaron Pope** (35), from Liberia, social worker.
- **Flora Man**, (23), from Singapore, born in China.

Both Aaron and Flora will be here one week after camp ends (August 7-13) and would be interested in sightseeing. They would need a home for a week.

Contact the church office if you are interested in hosting. The students typically do not want to come to the hosts family every weekend but only occasionally. Once again, each one is different.

### **BISHOP'S LETTER     by Deaconess Judy Hoshek, Asst. To the Bishop**

April 8, 2010

Dear Friends,

It seems self-evident, but I'm always surprised after filling a prescription for new glasses at how sharp and bright everything looks (I tend to wait too long between visits to the ophthalmologist) when I put them on for the first time. The clarity and color of the world delight the eyes.

The first time my prescription called for bifocals, I was less delighted and more disconcerted. It took me a while to adjust. The new lenses helped me see the fine print at which I'd long been squinting, but looking down and looking up made me dizzy for a while, and I navigated steps gingerly, until the wonder that is the combination of iris, pupil, retina, cornea regulated themselves and lo and behold, my vision was improved!

The women who went to the tomb on Easter morning had new lenses handed to them. They were looking out of grief-filled eyes, prepared to anoint a body. They encountered no body and a bit of an impertinent question considering they were at a tomb, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

As they adjusted to their new lenses which proclaimed, Life! Promise! Urgency! the memories of all the things Jesus said must have tumbled over and over in their minds as they raced to speak the stunning, wondrous words, "He has risen," to their friends.

Too good to be true? Too good not to be true? Reality through the lens of Jesus' resurrection is a whole new world. Years ago the congregation I served welcomed and resettled people from Cambodia who were refugees from the horrors their country endured because of war and hunger and the despotic regime of Pol Pot. When Holy Week came I took two young men to Good Friday worship. The next day we colored eggs and I haltingly explained why we were doing this (Why were we doing this??) I reminded them how we marked Jesus' death the evening before.

"But Jesus didn't stay dead," I explained. "Tomorrow we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead." Chan's eyes widened. "Not dead?" he said with wonder. I started to get excited too. "No," I said. "Alive again." Chan was looking at the account through new lenses and his awe inspired me.

I bring that exchange to mind on the occasion when I let myself get distracted or jaded and forget the revolutionary message of Easter.

Last evening I met with the leadership of four congregations in Trumbull County who have been "courting" for a couple years. They're on their way to forming a parish. The experience has not been without challenge. To become something new means looking at what is possible with different lenses and seeing new potential and promise. The folks around the table encouraged one another as did the pastors who have spearheaded this process. The parish, should it come to pass, will not have survival as its goal, but mission (from the Latin *missio*, being sent out with authority to perform a special duty.)

Their duty is ours, and our privilege – every congregation a mission station, our bishop proclaims. How are you living out that reality? Do you have on resurrection lenses to equip you for the task? Thirty years ago when Chan heard about the cross and the empty tomb for the first time, I thought he was the first person I'd known who wasn't aware of the fundamentals of the Jesus story. I knew lots who didn't believe it, but most folks in my world knew about the basics: born in a stable; good teacher; crucified; resurrected. That's no longer true in our corners of the world.

People don't know about God's grace and love. They don't know about the wisdom of the cross. They, if they think about it at all, consider the resurrection an idle tale.

We get to tell them the good news. We get to do it as we talk about what the cross means to us. We get to do it as we respond to pain and loneliness and injustice around us because we can't help ourselves. We've got on these resurrection lenses and they make everything different.

In Christ,  
Deaconess Judy Hoshek



