

Eco-Palms = Stewardship and Justice

Why does our congregation buy eco-palms? Eco-palms are sustainably harvested and fairly traded. That means the money our church spends on the palms is directly benefiting the communities where the palms are harvested. The extra nickel we spend per palm can send young girls to school, employ women, and build community centers. The palms are also being harvested in an environmentally friendly way. These new harvesting practices ensure that the same quality palms you see today will be there for years to come. Purchasing these palms protects the forests they are grown in.



St. Luke's is making social and environmental justice a part of our congregation's Palm Sunday celebration. Three years ago we decided to stop buying palm fronds that do not always represent the same jubilation for third world countries and the earth as they do for us.

More than 300 million palm fronds are harvested each year for U.S. consumption alone—most of them for Palm Sunday, but also for floral displays for church-related events. Our church's commitment to purchase Eco-Palms plays an important role in protecting forests, local jobs, and sustainable livelihoods in the harvesting communities.

So this Palm Sunday as we raise our branches in celebration, we can know that we are playing an important role in protecting forests, local jobs, and sustainable livelihoods in harvesting communities. Hosanna!

PA Southeast Conference Meeting (Continued from page 2)

Ms. Guffey will invite us to look at this time of transition for our Conference and guide us in opening our hearts to "imagine the possibilities." Whether you are a church delegate or visitor, youth or adult, plan to be part of our 2011 Spring Conference Meeting—the largest yearly gathering of our PSEC church family.



April Birthdays

Birthdays This Month

Lynne Fiato	2
MARGARITA KERN	3
DOROTHY HAMILL	7
Colleen Ott	7
Linda Oxman	10
MARION NEILL	11
HARRY WILLIAMS	18
Eddie Davis	21
Lois Wilson	28
Matthew Catmella	28

April Anniversaries

Stacey Sweeney &
Sarah O'Connor 15
Mike & Cookie Catmella

Celebrating 
An Anniversary This Month

A publication of
**St. Luke's
United Church of Christ**

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The Comma

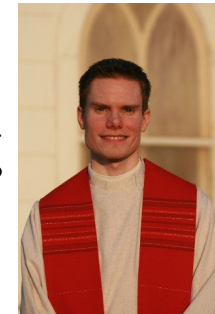


St. Luke's United Church of Christ

April 2011

We Have a Pastor

On a bright and sunny Sunday morning on March 13th forty four folks came to church to worship and to see and hear The Rev. Trent Williams deliver his candidation sermon.



Rev. Williams led the worship service and delivered the sermon. After the service thirty four members remained to cast their ballot to call Rev. Williams as their permanent pastor. Greetings from the Philadelphia Association were brought to those present by The Rev. Bill Middleton, who also oversaw the counting of the ballots. When the counting was done, Rev. Williams got thirty-three of the thirty-four votes. Finally, we could call him, Pastor Trent!

When the Search Committee delivered the good news to Pastor Trent and his partner, John, the two of them were all smiles—as well as the Search Committee.

The Search Committee thanks everyone for their vote of confidence. And, as a congregation, we thank *Janice Benz, Chet Derr, Lynne Fiato, Margarita Kern, Greg Weeman and Janet McManus* for their willingness to serve on the search committee.

Pastor Trent's ministry got off to a quick start—the very next day! You will find Pastor Trent in the church office on Tuesday and Thursday and he can always be reached by phone at 254.723.4443 or by email at revtrent@gmail.com.

Pastor Trent's Service of Installation will be held sometime after Easter. We'll keep you posted when this very special day is announced.

Holy Week at St. Luke's



Palm Sunday

April, 17, 2011, 10:30 am
Service of Palms

Holy Thursday

April 21, 2011, 7 pm
Readings, Music
Holy Communion

Good Friday

April 22, 2011, 12 noon
Ecumenical Service

Holy Saturday

April 23, 2011, 8 pm
Contemplative Easter Vigil

Easter

Sunday, April 24, 2011
Sunrise Service
6:30 a.m. at Historic
Glen Foerd Mansion

Festive Easter Service with
Holy Communion
10:30 a.m. at St. Luke's



Soup Kitchen Feeding

Our next Soup Kitchen feeding is set for **Saturday, April 9th**. Folks are needed to help with bagging lunches and serving the food at St. Mark's. We will be making up bagged lunches at the church at 9:30 a.m. then traveling down to St. Mark's to serve the diners. If you would like to volunteer, sign the sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference—Spring Meeting

Each spring congregations of the UCC Pennsylvania Southeast Conference gather for a family celebration—a time of fun, fellowship and conferring about the work of the Conference. This year's Spring Meeting will be on **Saturday, April 9**, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, PA. The theme will be *Through the Ages ~ Imagine the Possibilities*. The keynote speaker will be **Ms. Edith Guffey, Associate General Minister** of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio. As Associate General Minister, Ms. Guffey serves as operational executive of the Office of General Ministries and is responsible for the day-to-day work of that Office. Prior to her election as Associate General Minister, she

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Easter Vigil — April 23rd @ 8 pm

The Easter Vigil is one of the most ancient traditions in the church. Originally, it was an all-night vigil that culminated in the baptism of new members. This year, we will have a contemplative vigil in the Taize style, centered around water, word, and table. Come and join us as we tell the ancient stories of God's people, remember our baptism, and gather around the Table in anticipation of Easter morning.

Easter Offering

In a joyous spirit of new life, you are invited to make a special offering to the church on Easter. Just think of how many times we will be singing or shouting “Alleluia” on Easter morning! This year you are invited to let the “Alleluias” lift you to a whole new level of generous giving. Inserted into the bulletin on Easter will be a offering envelope. The monies received from this offering will stay at St. Luke's to assist in maintaining our church and its ministries. “Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!”



Social Networking

Pastor Trent, in his few weeks as our new pastor, has been busy getting our name “out there.” He believes strongly that the social networking sites like

(Continued on page 3)

Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence



A new anti-gun-violence organization is forming in Northwest Philadelphia called “Neighborhood Partners to End Gun Violence.” Neighborhood Partners is devoted to the reduction of the number of persons injured and killed by the use of handguns that are obtained by straw purchases and then distributed or sold on the streets illegally. It consists of numerous churches, synagogues, and civic organizations in Philadelphia and is affiliated with the faith-based group, “Heeding God's Call.” In particular, Neighborhood Partners is working with Heeding God's Call to identify gun shops that sell guns through illegal means (straw purchases in which guns are bought in bulk and re-sold on the streets) and put pressure on them to sign the Code of Conduct that puts in place mechanisms that reduce the likelihood that their guns will end up on the illegal market.

Neighborhood Partners has targeted Delia's Gun Shop at 6104 Torresdale, Philadelphia (19135), as a site that regularly sells via straw purchases. The group plans to hold a silent vigil calling on Delia's to sign the code of conduct voluntarily each first and third Tuesday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., hoping to pressure the owner into “doing the right thing.” This is not about gun control or closing the shop; rather, it is about reducing the number of straw purchases and guns sold that result in violent crime.

Neighborhood Partners will hold a Good Friday/Passover Service of Worship and Remembrance on at 4:00 pm at Delia's Gun Shop. For the last two years, Heeding God's Call has held a Good Friday service at two of the area gun shops, including Colisimo's in Center City. This year it will be at Delia's.



Philadelphia Association—Spring Meeting

The Spring Meeting of the Philadelphia Association is scheduled for **Sunday, May 1**, at Calvary UCC, 2900 West Lehigh Avenue, Philadelphia. Our theme is “Healing,” and our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Susan Minasian. A former pastor of Tabernacle Church and the former Admissions Director at Lancaster Seminary, Susan is currently serving as chaplain of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster. Each church is allowed two lay voting delegates, and all licensed, commissioned, and ordained clergy have voting privileges. Any other folks are welcome as visitors. All officer positions are up for election, as are several positions on the Committee on Ministry and Executive Committee.

Nice to hear from . . .

Evelyn Sonet
Beulah Behm
Barbara Weidman,
Gavin White

Acting Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Ministers Send Greetings

by Rev. Geneva Butz and Rev. Nancy Gotshall

Grace and peace to you in this season of preparation! We hope that you and your congregations are finding this Lenten season to be a time of deepening in faith and commitment.

Here at the Church House we are continuing to move forward during this transition time. This Saturday the Conference's Executive Committee will begin the process of reviewing profiles for an Interim Conference Minister. We have been assured that there are some strong candidates in the pool, and we ask for your prayers for the Executive Committee as they proceed with this search. When a candidate has been identified, he or she will be presented to the Conference Consistory for approval.

There are some other changes in the works that you need to know about. The Communications Team and the Conference Consistory are currently working on ways to meet our communications and technology needs in a more streamlined and cost-effective fashion. As a result, the Conference Consistory has voted to eliminate the position of Minister of Communication for the Conference. This means that Joe Irwin, who has served faithfully in this capacity for twelve years, will no longer be on our staff after June 15. While all the details have not yet been worked out, we are assured that we should be able to continue our service to the churches with a minimum of disruption. As we have more information, we will pass it on.

We are also focusing on Japan and what is happening following the recent earthquake and tsunami. As you know, we have several missionaries in Japan, especially Martha Mensendiek who visited our Conference two years ago. Martha serves in Koyoto which is in the south of the country and reports that she is safe. However, her brother Jeff serves in Sendai. He and his family are alive, but do not have heat, water, or electricity. Global Missions in Cleveland has already sent \$25,000 through Church World Service to support immediate relief to people now living at 100 evacuation sites in the northeast of Japan. Ready-to-eat food, drinking water, and sanitation kits, including soap and napkins, are being supplied. Blankets are also being issued from within the region to help people get some relief from the cold. Another need is batteries to be able to maintain radio contact for information on radiation-related news. More details can be found at the UCC website.

People have been asking about making contributions to be sent immediately to Japan. You can send your donation directly to the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. The check must be made payable to "PSEC" and include "Pacific Earthquake Tsunami" in the memo field of the check. Mail to: Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, PO Box 26400, Collegeville PA 19426.

Friends,

Grace and peace to you! I'm very excited to be here at St. Luke's, and I look forward to getting to know each of you better as we begin this journey in ministry together. I want to thank you all for the warm and gracious welcome that you've extended to me and to John, and for all the ways that you've made my first couple of weeks here comfortable and smooth.

This is an exciting time in the life of St. Luke's, and I believe that God has some great things in store for us. St. Luke's has a very clear sense of identity as a welcoming, progressive Christian community, and I believe that we are going to continue to build on the good work that has been done as we extend the invitation to more and more people who are looking for just this kind of place. I look forward to working with you as a congregation as we continue to identify places where we can more fully live into the call that God has given us.

The past year has been a challenging one for this community; March 31st marks the one-year anniversary of Pastor Chris's passing, and it's been a difficult time for St. Luke's. All of you who knew and loved Chris have had to face grief and spend time healing. But through it all, this community has pulled together and demonstrated care and love for one another. I know that I cannot and would not want to replace Chris, but I do believe that together, we can build on the good work that she began and continue to "draw the circle wide."

Throughout the remainder of this season of Lent and into Easter, let us commit ourselves anew to being good stewards of this place, this great gift called St. Luke's United Church of Christ.

Yours in the journey,
Pastor Trent

April Mission of the Month

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation works to eradicate breast cancer and improve the quality of women's health through innovative research, education, and advocacy. Learn about our programs. Find out how you can support the Foundation and the groundbreaking research that will end breast cancer in our lifetime.

Dr. Susan Love's research work to help eradicate breast cancer was very important to Pastor Chris. We hope that you will give a generous donation to this important Mission of the Month in loving memory of Pastor Chris and for the many others who have died from breast cancer.

Social Networking (Cont. from page 2)

Facebook and Twitter have the capacity to reach more people—it's like free advertising for our church. If you have a Facebook account, just search for St. Luke's United Church of Christ and if you have a Twitter account—www.twitter.com/stlukesucc



Lower Bucks Center for Church and Community Presents —

"Sing Hosanna"

"Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord." Psalm 150:6

The community is invited to attend the 20th Ecumenical Festival of Music which will take place on **Sunday, April 10th**, at 3:00 pm. The theme is "Sing Hosanna" and will graciously be hosted by the Anchor Presbyterian Church, 980 Durham Road, Wrightstown, PA, (215) 598-7859

The Pastor is Douglas Forsberg, the Director of Music is Shirley Piercy, and the organizer/coordinator is Belinda Ash, 215-860-3330.

Many area churches and meetings will participate in this event with varied ensembles (adult, children, instrumental, bell & signing choirs) performing music of their own choice to and for the Glory of God. There will be one combined choral anthem and two congregational hymns that will echo the theme of the festival.

Several musicians and ministers will share in this worship festival of music praising God. The churches taking part will include: Anchor Presbyterian, Church of the Holy Nativity, Lutheran Church of God's Love, Macedonia Baptist, Newtown United Methodist Church, Pineville Chapel, St. Andrew's Episcopal, Forest Grove Presbyterian, Thompson Memorial Presbyterian Church, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

This is a joyful and spirit filled celebration for all ages by all ages and the music will range from traditional to contemporary & from gospel to praise. Come and celebrate God's greatness on this glorious occasion and support the wonderful musicians who will be taking part. There will be a free will offering. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

Scrip News

Bath & Body Works 5% Bonus Begins April 2

With Mother's Day right around the corner, Great Lakes Scrip Center and Bath & Body Works are pleased to offer our customers a 5% bonus contribution on Bath & Body Gift Cards from Saturday, April 2, 2011, through Friday, April 29, 2011. That means both the \$10 and \$25 denomination gift cards will have an 18% contribution, instead of the normal 13% contribution, during that period only.



In mid-April we'll have a Mother's Day Memorial sign up sheet on the bulletin board for you to remember your mother or a loved one. All Mother's Day contributions will go to Philabundance's BabyManna program which buys infant formula and baby food. And is then made available to the Food Bank's member feeding agencies.

UCC, Global Ministries respond to disastrous earthquake and tsunami in Japan

*Written by Gregg Brekke
March 11, 2011*

Writing on behalf of the combined world mission of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Global Ministries co-executive directors told mission partners in Japan that the churches "will continue praying for you and seek ways to accompany you in the path that lies ahead."

The letter to the Rev. Aobora Taemae, general secretary of the United Church of Christ in Japan, was sent by the Rev. David Vargas, president of the Division of Overseas Ministries in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, executive minister of the UCC's Wider Church Ministries.

Following the devastating 8.9-magnitude earthquake and resultant tsunami that left hundreds dead, a broad path of destruction in Japan and triggered warnings around the Pacific, Global Ministries staff have been actively attempting to make contact with mission person-

nel in Japan.

News was also good for Eileen Sanderson, a member of **First UCC in Hampton, Va.**, also in Sendai. A recent graduate of Hope College in Mich., she has been in Japan since February teaching English. First UCC pastor the Rev. Marc Stewart reports family received news



via a text message that Eileen survived the earthquake and tsunami.

The Rev. Douglas Anders, the UCC's South Central Conference Minister, has extensive family connections in Japan. Anders' mother was able to contact a sister in Tokyo who reported that other siblings in the vicinity of Sendai had experienced structural damage to their homes but were spared the force of the tsunami waters.

"I invite your prayers for all people affected by today's earthquake-tsunami, especially the people of northern Japan," said Anders in an email to other Conference Ministers, noting that the possibility of such a disaster is contained in the "Japanese collective psyche."

"They know what happened today could happen any day, so in so ways they were prepared. But as one lives through such an event, you realize one can never be fully prepared for the magnitude of damage and destruction," said Anders.

The UCC's Hawaii Conference reports that damage on the islands was confined to isolated flooding and debris, and that several churches on higher ground opened their doors as shelters. The Marshall Islands, Pohnpei and American Samoa, where the UCC has historic partnerships, were spared the effects of the tsunami.