

## Imagine Spring is Just Around the Corner . . .

That is especially true as we focus on the Spring Meeting of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, which will take place at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, and will be a one-day event on **Saturday, April 9**, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Our theme is Forward Through the Ages ~ Imagine What's Possible. It is inspired by the hymn with the same title, "Forward Through the Ages," reminding us that we are "Bound by God's far purpose in one living whole, move we on together to the shining goal."

The theme for this year's General Synod is "Imagine What's Possible" and invites us to think beyond what is and dream toward a future filled with wonderful possibilities. These themes seem especially apropos in light of the transition we are currently experiencing in our conference.

### Highlights of the Spring Meeting:

- Edith Guffey, Associate General Minister for the United Church of Christ, will be our keynote speaker and one of our forum leaders.
- Byron Borger of *Hearts and Minds* Bookstore will not only be present with books and resources, but will also lead a forum focusing on "must read" books.
- We have sought to arrange the day in such a way that there will be adequate time to enjoy displays and the bookstore, as well as to network and breathe in between the scheduled activities.
- A conferring session to discuss important matters in the life of the conference has been scheduled for the afternoon, followed by worship.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us on April 9<sup>th</sup>, then look for more details and registration information in the weeks to come.

## This Month's Birthdays March Birthdays

Mary Yingling	1
David Schubert	7
Woody Paules	7
Rick Rossi	11
Janet Kistner	13
Bob Bender	15
Toni Dukeman	20
Kimberly Oeschger	24
Diane Oeschger	26
Barbara Shivelhood	28

## Nice to hear from



Beulah Behm  
Evelyn Sonet  
Barbara Weidman  
Gavin White

## Change of Address

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# The Comma



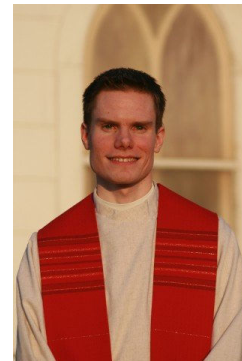
St. Luke's United Church of Christ

March 2011

## We have a candidate

It seems like the Consistory only put together a Search Committee a few months ago, and then the committee got to meet only once to look at profiles—and now here we are announcing that “we have a candidate.” You might be thinking to yourself, “Did they really do their homework? Or did they read other profiles and interview other candidates?” To those questions the committee would say that, “yes, they did read other profiles” but actually, the Search Committee thinks that God knew what was best for St. Luke’s and did the selecting for them. And here’s why.

In early January, Lois asked if she could have Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> off. We made some calls to find a supply minister for that Sunday. Calls were made to supply pastors and all were already preaching elsewhere on that Sunday. One call was made to a Rev. Trent Williams who enthusiastically said yes. Mind you now, we were only looking for a supply minister for that day so we were very glad just to have someone. Well, little did we know that this “someone” would walk into St. Luke’s—lead the worship service, deliver a wonderful message, stay and mingle with the worshipers and—of course—have birthday cake. It was as if Rev. Williams had been a part of St. Luke’s for years. Many that were in worship that day liked this minister immediately and wanted to know if he had a church. Well, he didn’t—and as it turned out he was looking



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## Prayer & Reflection to Study Nouwen

The Prayer and Reflection group has just began a study on Henri Nouwen’s book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* in February.

A chance encounter with a poster depicting a detail of Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* set in motion a chain of events that enabled Nouwen to redefine and claim his vocation late in his life.

To bring the book study to life each month a poster of Rembrandt's painting was purchased and then framed by Lynne Fiato. This beautiful poster can be seen in the Pastor’s study.



If you would like to join this study now, speak to Pastor Eve for more details.

## Thank you Pastor Lois

Saying “thank you” is just what we will be doing on **Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>** when we thank Pastor Lois for her ministry at St. Luke’s these last four years. Lois came to St. Luke’s in 2006 when invited by two good friends, Todd and Glenn, who invited her to come check out this fantastic church that they found. Lois’ talents are many—and we have all enjoyed her music, storytelling, art work and creative displays for communion and special services.

For the last nine months Pastor Lois has been a blessing to our church and has helped members and friends grieve the loss of Pastor Chris, lead the worship service each Sunday, visit those in need of pastoral care, offered a caring touch and listen-

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## Ash Wednesday Service

On **Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>**, Richard Keeler will lead the Ash Wednesday service along with other Elders and Pastor Eve who will offer anointing and Holy Communion. The theme of the service is From Despair to Hope and will be a Taizé style worship service which will include several readings from Scripture and the book, *Seeds of Taizé*. The book is a reflection on the Bible in silence and song.

One of the elements of Taizé worship is meditative singing. Singing is one of the most essential elements of worship. Short songs, repeated again and again, give it a meditative character. Using just a few words they express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, this reality gradually penetrates the whole being. Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God. It allows everyone to take part in a time of prayer together and to remain

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## Helping a family

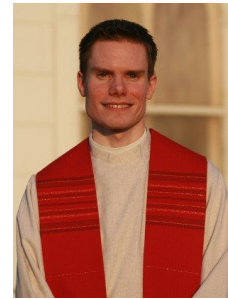
The Rossi family, Rick, Marian, Thomas and Ricky, would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to St. Luke’s members for their generous contributions to the Rossi Family Fund which was established by the Consistory. Contributions to this fund will enable the family to make the needed renovations to have a stair lift installed and to help with other additional expenses that may arise in the future.

## St. Luke’s Scores Big

We want to thank everyone who filled our soup pots with checks and cash on February 6<sup>th</sup> when we held our own Souper Bowl (of Caring). Our young people, Thomas and Dylan, stood ready and waiting with soup pots—and they weren’t disappointed! We received \$206 which will be used for our Soup Kitchen feedings. Thanks for your sharing and caring.



## Rev. Williams Biographical Sketch—



### Education:

- **Master of Divinity**, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX-May 2007
- **Bachelor of Arts, cum laude**, Baylor University, Waco, TX-May 2001

### Ministry Experience:

- **Director of Faith Formation**, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Glenside, PA, 9/2010--present. Currently serving in a part-time capacity as director of Christian education ministries at a medium-sized Episcopal parish, overseeing children's, youth, and adult education programs, including Godly Play, Journey to Adulthood, and adult forums.
- **Stated Supply Pastor**, First United Church UCC, West, TX, 7/2009-8/2010. Served as the stated Supply Pastor for a small-town congregation on an interim basis. Provided worship leadership, pastoral care, and Christian education, having led the congregation to re-start its Sunday School offering.
- **Pastor**, Trinity United Church of Christ, Timberville, VA, 2/2008-7/2008. During his brief tenure, he led the leadership of the church to re-evaluate the Christian education programming, and set long-range goals for a comprehensive program that included Godly Play for the children, a rotating curriculum series for the youth, and a lectionary-based Bible study for the adults. He also helped to conclude the process of a new hymnal adoption, leading the committee to settle on the *Chalice Hymnal*.

- **Pastoral Intern**, Friends Congregational Church, College Station, TX, 9/2006-4/2007. Served in medium-sized university town congregation, with emphasis on worship, Christian Education, and spiritual development ministries, working closely with committees in their respective areas. Emphasis on teaching social justice advocacy issues, and working with volunteer church leaders. Occasional preaching and pastoral care duties.
- **Pastor**, St. Paul United Church of Christ, Marlin, TX, 2/2003-8/2006. Served as part-time pastor for small rural congregation; preaching, worship planning, and pastoral care duties. Emphasis on outreach and renewal for declining congregation. Initiated and helped to plan and lead regional All Saint's Day gathering of area UCC congregations, November 2005. Led the congregation to become a "Still-Speaking" church in the UCC and led the process of adopting a the *New Century Hymnal*.

I believe that ministry is the calling of the whole church, not only ordained leadership. Ministry is the collaboration of ordained and lay people, mutually empowering one another as we work toward the vision of the realm of God, seeking to proclaim good news to the world: that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Godself. We are called to be a people that seeks justice and peace and embodies the inclusive nature of God's reign. I understand my call to ministry as a call to service in the local church. My calling is to serve the congregation through preaching, teaching, pastoral care and guidance. I believe that a calling to ministry is the call to service on behalf of Jesus Christ, who was the ultimate example of servant leadership. Working to empower the community of faith to find its vocation and call as servants of God in the world is my vision and passion.

*Candidate (Continued from page 1)*

for a church—one just like St. Luke's—small in size, but full of potential and vitality. Rev. Williams saw something special in our church on that day.

The next day Rev. Williams had the Conference send the Search Committee his profile. Needless to say, after the committee read Rev. Williams profile they wanted to interview him—and did on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Williams told the Search Committee, during the interview, that he and his partner John were overwhelmed by the radical hospitality and welcome they received—and knew that it was genuine. They felt the Spirit's leading that Sunday—and so did we. After the interview the members of the search committee all agreed to consider Rev. Williams as a pastoral candidate.

On **Sunday, March 13**, Rev. Williams will lead the worship service and deliver his candidating message. Immediately following the worship service active members of the church will have the opportunity to vote whether or not to “call” Rev. Trent Williams as our permanent part-time minister. A member of the Philadelphia Association's Committee on Ministry will be present to oversee the voting process.

We hope that you will be present on this day to hear Rev. Williams and welcome him into our church and pulpit.

**Note:** You can learn more about Rev. Williams on page 7

*Three Million Walking Challenge (Continued from page 5)*

the marketing blocks. "They put our church's name and event on their advertising to places like Charlotte and Atlanta, and all over the arts community," says King.

Peace Congregational is extending an extravagant invitation to any and all out-of-towners traveling to Pendleton for the run. "If they can get here, we'll find a place from them to stay," says Smith, further sweetening the pot by noting that early spring weather in Pendleton can be most comfortable.

A 20-week milestone celebration will be held at General Synod the first week in July in Tampa, Fla., to recognize individuals and/or churches for their commitment to walking during the first five months of the challenge. Those participating in the second half will be honored in November.

## In Our Prayers

We offer prayers of healing for *Harry Reilly* who underwent triple by-pass surgery on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Harry is progressing nicely and his family is thankful for answered prayers.

We are also thankful that *Robyn George* is home recovering from surgery and pneumonia. Her husband, Bill says she is getting stronger every day and thanks everyone for their cards, emails and calls.

We pray for *Helen Johnson* who is in Aria-Torresdale Hospital for pneumonia and tests. We also pray for her husband, *Bill*.

We continue to offer healing prayer for *Rick Rossi*. May Rick and his family feel the divine Presence enfolding them in peace and in love.

## In Sympathy

We offer our condolences and prayers to *Judy Hollon* on the death of her mother who passed away in February.

A publication of  
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Dear Ones,

*There is beauty in this journey!*

Little did I know when I first stepped through the doors of St. Luke's in the spring of 2006 that my life would be changed in so many ways.

There is simply no way to list or measure all the ways that St. Luke's has helped me grow and change. Pastor Chris was an extraordinary mentor, who always encouraged me to use my creative gifts to the fullest. The leadership here has been a constant source of guidance and support. But it is the congregation that has changed me most of all: your love, your openness to new ideas, and your willingness to allow me to serve in so many different ways...these have shaped me in more ways than I can possible count, and my heart is filled to the brim with gratitude. Thank you.

I hope you know how precious you are to me.

It was here at St. Luke's that I heard the Spirit call me to the pastorate. It was St. Luke's that journeyed with me through the discernment process. And St. Luke's will be the place where (one day soon, I hope!) I will be ordained. St. Luke's is, quite simply, HOME.

It is, of course, with sadness that we part ways for a while. But it is necessary for the good of the congregation and your relationship with your new pastor. The wisdom and experience of many pastors and congregations bear witness to this, and it is truly best. Yet be assured of this, Beloved: though I may be absent from you physically, you will ALWAYS be present with me in my heart. Your love goes with me and will bring me great courage and joy on the next leg of my journey.

You are, and always will be, very dear to my heart.

Love always,  
*Pastor Lois*



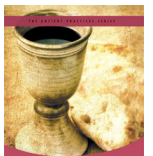
## Congratulations, Rich!

We are happy to announce that Rich Keeler has been approved for Licensed Ministry by the North Penn Association. With licensure, Rich is able to perform the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism at the church where he is now serving.



## Lenten Reading

Each year the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Spiritual Life Mission Team suggests a book to read for Lent. This year the book, *The Sacred Meal* by Nora Gallagher is suggested. This book has received much acclaim! Barbara Brown Taylor, pastor, author, teacher, and preacher writes, "This is the book I have been waiting for—to give to seekers who are wary of pious language, to believers who have dozed off in their pews, to pastors who want to know how to speak in fresh ways of old truths, to anyone who asks me why I am still Christian."



## One Great Hour of Sharing

Deciding to share is tough sometimes, especially when we feel we barely have enough to get by ourselves. But compared to people whose lives have been ravaged by disaster, or who live on less than \$1 a day, we have a great abundance.

Soon, we will be invited to help people in need around the world and in communities impacted by disasters in the United States through the One Great Hour of Sharing® (OGHS) offering. As the church, we are called to help one another, even through the sharing of our own resources.

Giving changes so many things, for the receiver and the giver. Can you imagine the joy on a mother's face, who because of your gift, can send her children to school or provide them with a meal before bed? OGHS supports many initiatives that help women start their own businesses or learn a wage-earning skill. Programs that through your gift, you become a partner.

By sharing our resources, combined with offerings from thousands of other congregations in eight denominations across the United States, we:

- build homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water and sewage facilities in villages devastated by earthquakes, floods, and poverty
- bring safety, shelter, and food to refugees after often violent circumstances have made their hometowns uninhabitable
- nurture stronger futures and self-sufficiency through health care, education, job training, and tools for livelihoods.

We are blessed that God is able to provide when and where help is needed through us. (2 Corinthians 9:8-15)

When you make your gift to the March Mission of the Month, please give generously.

One Great Hour of Sharing: sharing resources, changing lives, bringing joy!



*Thank you (Continued from page 2)*  
ing ear to folks and helped our church family prepare for its next journey.

We hope you will all be here on **March 6<sup>th</sup>** to tell Pastor Lois thank you for her ministry to St. Luke's Church. There will be plenty of time for hugs, tears, conversation—and good things to eat. And to wish her well in her journey towards seeking Ordination in the United Church of Christ. When that day comes for Pastor Lois there will be a celebration at St. Luke's like none other you've ever seen!

*Ash Wednesday (Cont. from page 2)*  
together in attentive waiting on God.

These songs also sustain personal prayer. Through them, little by little, our being finds an inner unity in God. They can continue in the silence of our hearts when we are at work, speaking with others or resting. In this way prayer and daily life are united. They allow us to keep on praying even when we are unaware of it, in the silence of our hearts.

We hope you will join us for this special Taizé Ash Wednesday service on **March 9** at **7 p.m.**

## UCC congregations lace up to meet 'Three Million Walking Challenge'

*Written by Jeff Woodard  
January 26, 2011*

Positioning its momentum squarely onto the trail blazed by First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative to battle obesity in America, the United Church of Christ is asking all of its churches to get up and get going.

As part of the "Three Million Walking Challenge," the UCC goal is for at least 250 churches and/or 2,500 UCC members to commit to walking 5 miles or 10,000 steps a week in two phases – Jan. 30-June 17, and July 11- Nov. 18.

The combined goal is 600,000 miles. Final totals will be sent to Obama, whose hope is that faith and community organizations nationwide walk a collective 3 million miles by the end of November.

Setting the early pace for the longer haul was the high-energy worship service Jan. 19 in the Amistad Chapel at the UCC's national headquarters in Cleveland. Worshipers sampled "Instant Recess! Bringing Mind-Body-Spirit Wellness

Into Our Faith Journeys," a session developed by a member of the "Let's Move" campaign that invites participants to move for 10 minutes of health.

"It featured a great YouTube video that had everyone on their feet and in their chairs walking with a dance beat with some simple exercises," says Kimberly Whitney, UCC minister for community life and assistant to the Collegium. "It was inspired by (UCC Minister for Health Care Justice) Barbara Baylor's reading of the Beatitudes from a lens for good health."

Meanwhile, in Pendleton, S.C., Pastor Susie Smith and members of Peace Congregational UCC—a new-church start prepared to receive full UCC standing this spring—have April 2 highlighted on their calendars.

"We are planning the first annual Peace Power Run for our community," says Smith. "It will be a 5k-certified course run as part of Pendleton's



Spring Jubilee."

Impetus for the event was generated by Peace Congregational members and avid runners Nancy King and Maria Mayorga. One day during their mind-clearing, energizing run, the idea for the race emerged.

"The historic division of our Community Square has this juried art show (Spring Jubilee) on the first Saturday in April," says King, noting that a quarter-mile "fun run" for children will also be held. "They said they'd tie our church's race into promotion of their event if we give them a percentage of the money to help them restore one of the historical buildings."

Partnering with Spring Jubilee has helped Peace Congregational to a fast start out of

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