



The Beacon • September 2023

Saint Peter's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Kimberly Stryjak, Minister

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“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” - Jeremiah 29:11

This is a significant time of year in many households; school has resumed. Young adults have started college classes, teenagers have transitioned to middle school or to high school, little kids have entered or returned to elementary school or preschool. This time is full of many emotions as the new school year begins. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or family friend, as we look at our students returning to school, there are so many emotions that swirl around within us: being proud of all they have accomplished and all that they are growing into, excitement for what lies ahead, anxiety because we are sending them out into the unknown, and a deep love for who they are.

As I contemplated the emotions of this first day of school for all those sending their loved ones into a new year of learning, I thought about what God must feel each time we take the next step on our spiritual journeys. When we are faced with new adventures, decisions in life, both small and big, and the start of a new year, how does God react? I imagine as we discern and then choose transformation for ourselves, God gets emotional - full of love and bursting with pride that we are taking steps to grow into who God calls us to be. See, if we can feel all these emotions as our children grow and take on each new chapter of life, then how much more does God feel these each time a beloved child of God grows and transforms.

Our scripture verse from Jeremiah above reminds us that God is present for us in each new chapter of our lives. God wants us to prosper, to take on challenges and changes with the

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knowledge that God is guiding us with grace and love. As we enter this new season of autumn, with changes in schedules and lives, we can continue the process of growing into who God wants us to be as a congregation and I am confident that God will be there encouraging and guiding us along the way. St. Peter's has a palpable hope and a future in God, let us listen to where God is leading us.

Blessings,

-pastor Kim

A Heartfelt Thank You

Saint Peter's took on a big job in 2016 when we re-roofed our building and updated our HVAC system, and to do that big job, we took out a line of credit from the United Church of Christ's Cornerstone Fund. Using generous donations large and small, we have steadily paid it down, but a large sum remained, one that we knew we could not cover in our 2023 budget.

It is with gratitude that we recognize Kathy Lubas and her family, who blessed Saint Peter's with their request that the memorial funds donated in Wayne's memory be used to pay off our remaining Cornerstone Fund line of credit. Saint Peter's is now debt free.

Thanks to the Lubas family, from the bottom of our hearts, for this generous gift. We ask that you continue to remember them in your prayers.

Parish News & Prayers

We appreciate hearing news from our members. If you have something you would like to share with us and have us share on your behalf, we invite you to contact the church office to let us know.

In Remembrance

We give thanks for the life of John J. Mitchell, Jr., who passed into eternal life on Tuesday, August 29, 2023. Services for John will be private, but we ask that you please keep his whole family in your prayers, most especially his three children, Emily, Logan, and Avery.

Sunday School

We will be starting Sunday School with the children on Sunday, September 17th. If you would like to help with St. Peter's children's Christian education program as a teacher or as a helper to prepare craft activities, call or see Lydia Batz at the church on Sunday.

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There is always something to do to help make our children's learning experience fun. We have some exciting new ideas for the children to learn about Jesus. Some of these activities may be a little bit messy, so please send a smock or oversized T-shirt along with your child on their first attendance and we'll hold it here for them to use on future such occasions.

Also, the adults meet on Sundays at 9 AM in the church office for a lesson about the scripture that is being used in church that day. Our discussions have proven to be interesting. Bring your coffee or tea and come join us any Sunday morning, I promise no homework, just good discussion and fellowship.

—Lydia Batz

Outdoor Worship in the Pavilion

Weather permitting, we plan to enjoy worship in the pavilion once more this summer on September 10th. If needed, the rain date will be the 17th. If the weather looks threatening, please check your email or St. Peter's Facebook page for communication about moving worship indoors.

Power of Prayer

Please always remember one another in your prayers. We are grateful for the power of prayer to keep us connected to God, renewing our strength and courage. If you have a prayer request or would like to join the list of those praying for others, please contact the church office.

Church Happenings for Fellowship & Outreach



Clothing Drive for Hope Rescue Mission - UPDATE

The August clothing drive we hosted to benefit Hope Rescue Mission was a wonderful success. Thanks to your donations we were able to provide nearly 40 bags of items to help clothe the men, women and children who are served by HRM!

Church Picnic

Please mark your calendars for our 2nd Annual Kickoff Picnic hosted at the Sunday's home. This year we will be having a Fall Kickoff Picnic on Saturday September 16th from 4 PM until 8 PM. A sign-up sheet is in the Welcome Center, or you may sign up through our SignUpGenius that was recently emailed.

Breakfast with a Purpose

Are you as excited as I am? We have already helped a family thanks to your generosity when you attended our Free Will Breakfast with a Purpose! We donated two gift cards to a family

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who has a little girl who has been in CHOP since last December! Our next Breakfast will be held on Sunday, September 24th immediately after worship service. The menu will be French toast with fruit, sausage, bagels & cream cheese, juice and coffee. Come out and join our church family for breakfast and fellowship. Please sign up in the welcome center if you would like to help. Thank you and hope to see you on the 24th.

—Lydia Batz

Book Club

Interested in joining the St. Peter's Fall book club? A sign-up sheet is now in the Welcome Center. We will be reading the book "The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot" by Marianne Cronin. Our first book club meeting will be on Thursday, October 12th at 7 PM at the home of Kim & Brian Barndt. A sign up is in the Welcome Center for anyone interested. Future meeting dates are 11/8 and 12/6 with the location to be announced closer to those dates.

Guts & Glory - Digestive & Wellness Expo

Gust & Glory is a free, for all ages, pet friendly, annual community event presented by MyGutInstinct.org whose mission is promoting wellness through preventative health care and holistic wellbeing. This event is happening Saturday, September 23, 2023, from 10 AM until 3 PM at Penn State Berks - Perkins Plaza Event Lawn (1801 Broadcasting Rd, Reading, PA 19610)

St. Peter's is excited be participating in this event as a vendor and we invite you to come celebrate health while checking out all this year's exhibits and vendors and/or to represent St. Peter's at our vendor table by volunteering for a few hours. We will offer baskets for raffle as well as handheld crosses and prayer beads for sale.

The lead up to this event is a wonderful opportunity for our members to exercise their craftiness and creativity in any of the following ways:

- Team up with other St. Peter's members/friends to put together a themed basket to donate to the raffle
- Donate items that we could use to make raffle baskets - we can provide of list of items that make fun basket "themes"
- Make or help make prayer beads - starting the week of August 20th, we will have a prayer bead "kit" and pattern available in the church office if you need it or you can choose & supply your own materials and creativity!
- Make or help make a wooden handheld cross - if you are an able woodworker, there will be tracing patterns available in the office or you may help by volunteering to sand and polish crosses cut out by others.

If interested in any of these different ways to be involved with this event, please contact the church office to let us know.

Highlights from Consistory

St. Peter's 2023 Consistory members are: Derek Rutter, Jane Brubaker, Lydia Batz, Debbie Royles, Juli Winkler, Allan Owen, Bryan Sterner, Larry Ross, Kim Barndt, Eric Lamm, Dan Whitman. The highlights from June's Consistory meeting include:

- It is always good to celebrate and recognize the joy in our lives. As a church family, one way we do this is to recognize the achievements of all those who have graduated each year. During graduation Sunday we not only were able to bless our graduates, but we also gave each graduate a gift consisting of a small journal that Pastor Kim wrote a note in, along with a St. Peter's pen to let each graduate know that we hold them in our thoughts and prayers as they begin the next part of their journey. If you have a graduate and did not receive a gift, please contact the church office as some remain here.
- To continue caring for our church family, we are looking to find a UCC resource/curriculum that will help us to train individuals who are interested in helping with home visitation. We already have members that visit our homebound members, and these visits are a great blessing to them. This program will be available to those who already visit to enhance your visitation as well as to those who would be interested in visiting members but feel they would need some guidance in doing so.
- VBS was re-envisioned into an intergenerational program standing for "Volunteer - Believe - Serve." We had two opportunities this summer, one weeknight and one Sunday afternoon, for our church members to volunteer at the gardens at Opportunity house in service to our wider community.
- We are continuing to care for our property by some of Consistory partnering together to clean and paint the exterior block walls to improve their appearance. We are also looking into possibly getting some of the trees removed that are very close to the building and re-planting to be considered. Unfortunately, there is a risk of these types of trees falling on our building in a storm. They also continually clog our gutters and cause water to overflow and puddle at the base of our building. Consistory is looking into quotes to determine the cost of this project.

Other Support Opportunities

Wilson Area Food Pantry

The Wilson Area Food Pantry distributes food to community members in need on the 3rd Friday of every month. St. Peter's is continuously accepting food donations in order to help the pantry in their mission to fight food insecurity, however the pantry has additional needs you may be able to help with as a volunteer, particularly on the 14th and 15th of September, as detailed in the following email update we received from their volunteer coordinator, Judy Romberger:

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“I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer as we start the calendar off with the first Friday of September being the 1st of the month meaning an earlier pantry date of the 15th of September.

We served 80 families in August totaling 287 people including seniors and children. We are also the location in the Wilson Area for the Senior Box distribution which includes a box of cheese and this service is increasing. Please consider volunteering some time if you are around the week of September 14th for set -up 12:30 to 2:30 and September 15th for giving food out to neighbors in need from 2:30 to 5. NOTE: This month it is the SECOND Thursday but the **THIRD Friday**. We can use ANY TIME YOU CAN GIVE!

At the August Pantry we only had 7 people on carts instead of 11 which really made us short but we survived. This month Marti's crew (of 4 guys} are going on vacation and we need guys who can lift groceries for taking outside to the cars plus one for outside car loading. PLEASE!

The pantry needs donations of nonperishable food items. The pantry especially needs donations of:

1. Canned fruits
2. Canned vegetables
3. Pasta sauce or tomato sauce
4. Spaghetti
5. Canned meats especially canned tuna, spam, or chicken
6. Peanut butter

We need people who can lift boxes that we plan to be giving out and helping tear down and set up Thursday and Friday. The Helping Harvest truck comes at 1:30 to unload our order on Thursday September 14th. The more help the faster it goes for all. Mark your calendar for the September 15th distribution and the other dates below; we will take any hours you can give us!

Everyone that volunteers must complete the civil rights training once per year. If you need to do this, you can review the civil rights training materials at <http://wilsonareafoodpantry.org/Files/Civil%20Rights%20Training%202018.pdf> and then sign in on our sheet at the pantry when you first serve our clients.

We greatly appreciate any and all who volunteer! May God Bless you all with the heart of a true volunteer for God's service to others!

Thanks!

Judy Romberger

Volunteer Coordinator - OUR MISSION IS TO SERVE OTHERS IN GOD'S NAME”

Dates to Remember



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| September 3 | Communion |
| September 10 | Outdoor worship (17 th as rain date) Spiritual Council meets |
| September 16 | Church Picnic @ Sunday home 4-8pm |
| September 17 | Children's Sunday School begins Consistory meets |
| September 23 | Guts & Glory Digestive & Wellness Expo, 10am-3pm |
| September 24 | "Breakfast with a Purpose" after worship |
| October 7 | Oktoberfest Celebration in the Pavilion 5-8pm |
| October 12 | Book Club @ Barndt home 7pm |
| November 8 | Book Club, location TBD 7pm |
| December 6 | Book Club, location TBD 7pm |
| December 16-17 | St. Peter's 100 th blood drive event |