

Bible Readings for the Month



The Disciple

News of St. John soars like an eagle!

St. John's United Church of Christ
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Volume 15, Issue 3

April 14, 2015

**Pastor Karen's
Korner**

“In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” Acts 2:17-18 (NRSV)

The text from Acts 2 is a quote from the book of the prophet Joel, and is part of the text usually read for Pentecost. We call Pentecost the birthday of the church for it is the day we celebrate Jesus sending the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, and 3,000 people believed in Christ.

Jews from every part of the empire were in Jerusalem, for the feast of Pentecost, which was and is still today the celebration of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

I've always loved this imagery. I imagine Jesus with a giant pitcher pouring out wind and fire upon us, filling us with creativity, imagination and bodacious visions of what He wants to do with us. I see so much of Jesus' love that it is dripping off of us and touching all we come in contact with.

What would it look like if each of us had visions and dreams for ourselves, the church, our community and the world that were given to us by the Holy Spirit?

Recently I read an article by the Rev. Cameron Trimble, CEO of the Center for Progressive Renewal, a center for coaching pastors and laity in innovative ministries. The following is a part of her article.

“This morning I had breakfast with a pastor of a large congregation in Atlanta. Toward the end of the conversation, she paused, leaned across the table, and whispered almost as if she was worried I would think she had lost her mind completely, ‘I have a crazy, huge dream of what our church could be in the world.’ She then went on to outline one of the most exciting, visionary strategies that I have ever heard from a pastor. By the time she finished talking, I was ready to quit my job and sign up to help. She must succeed. The world needs this kind of church to exist.

“I drove back to the office pondering what it would be like if more of us could and would dream bigger dreams, not just for ourselves but also for our world. I would love to live in such a place.

“When we connect with God as the creative force in our lives, our churches and the world, we will do more than we could ever imagine.

“Sometimes I wonder if we dream smaller dreams for our lives and even our congregations because we doubt who we are and whose we are. If we actually understood—at the core of our being—that we are children of God, created in God's image and likeness, we would find limiting thoughts, dreams or ambitions distasteful at best.

“What dream is hiding within you that the world needs you to live out? What idea has been planted in you that feels ready to burst boldly into life? What hope can you whisper to a friend over breakfast and with that breath, paint a picture so inspiring she or he would quit their job for it and join you on the journey?

“Speak it. Do it. Live it. Today. We are all in this together.”

Let us dare to open ourselves to God's dreams, trusting that the Holy Spirit will fill us with the vision, will and energy to make them real.

Peace,
Pastor Karen



May 3–5th Sunday of Easter–Psalm 22: 25-31; Acts 8: 26-40; 1 John 4: 7-21; John 15: 1-8
 May 10–6th Sunday of Easter–Psalm 98; Acts 10: 44-48; 1 John 5: 1-6; John 15; 9-17
 May 17–7th Sunday of Easter–Psalm 1; Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26; 1 John 5: 9-13; John 17: 6-19
 May 24–Pentecost Sunday–Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b; Acts 2: 1-21; Romans 8: 22-27; John 15: 26-27;
 16: 4b-15
 May 31–1st Sunday after Pentecost–Isaiah 6: 1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8: 12-17; John 3: 1-17



May 10–Festival of the Family (pg. 3)
 May 24–Pentecost and Holy Communion
 May 31–Youth Sunday (pg. 3)

Looking Ahead:

June 7–Summer worship starts at 10am
 June 14–Church worship at 10am with picnic at Bucky Boyle Park to follow

June 18-24–Pastor Karen on vacation

June 25-30–General Synod in Cleveland, Pastor Karen to attend

June 28–Lois Mease will lead worship

July 13-17–Vacation Bible School



In honor of Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, please read this poem provided by the U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program.

Great Spirit, give us hearts to understand,
 never to take from creation's beauty more than we give,
 never to destroy wantonly for the furtherance of greed,
 never to deny to give our hands for the building of earth's beauty,
 never to take from her what we cannot use.
 Give us hearts to understand that to destroy earth's music is to create confusion,
 that to wreck her appearance is to blind us to beauty,
 that to callously pollute her fragrance is to make a house of stench,
 that as we care for her she will care for us. Amen

Adult Forum

Each Sunday morning we gather for challenging and informative programs in Adult Forum. We meet in the Trinity Room for coffee and fellowship at 9:30am. We share joys and concerns around 9:45am and begin the program shortly thereafter. If you have not been attending, we would love to have you join us.

May 3—"Our PNEC Disaster Response Ministry volunteers took a leap of faith and answered the call for a home in Lehighton damaged by storm Sandy. This is the first ever the United Church of Christ took charge of a rebuild. Linda Lenhart agreed to be Case Manager of the project, with full support of our PNEC. Our project manager, Grant Field, and Coordinator of Volunteers, Donna Zangari, and our faithful volunteers worked five Saturdays this past fall. We plan to gather on Saturday, April 25, hopefully to complete our project. Come join us on May 3 as we share our stories of how God worked in us and with us with our Yolanda Lehighton project.

May 10—"Extravagant Opportunity". In anticipation of the UCC designating the third Sunday in May as Mental Health Sunday, we will discuss how to be welcoming to those with mental illness and families with children with mental illness.

May 17—Kristina Schwartz is the Community School Director at Central Elementary School. This program is part of the Boys' & Girls' Club of Allentown. She has been assisting St. John's volunteers in finding projects at Central. She will tell us all about her work and explain how important our congregation's monthly gifts have been to the children at Central.

May 24—This is the day we "brainstorm" ideas for next year's Adult Forums. We really need your input, so please help us think!

These will be our last Adult Forums until September.

Messages
from the



Festival of the Family May 10

All of us have someone who gave us life. On this day during worship we will remember those persons who gave us life and those who have been as family to us.

Rev. Geoffrey Black Is Coming to the Lehigh Valley

On May 16, there will be two opportunities to meet with Rev. Black, our UCC president and General Minister before he leaves office at General Synod this summer.

First, the Youth from PNEC and Pennsylvania Southeast are invited to a Youth Forum at Hopefest, 2pm, Hope UCC, Allentown

Second, there will be a dinner and round-table discussion at 5pm, at Phoebe Allentown, Moyer Hall, at a cost of \$10 per person. To make a reservation contact Barbara Jennings at PNEC office, # 610-826-3113 or BarbaraJ@PNEC.org or by mailing your check to PNEC, 431 Delaware Avenue, Palmerton, PA 18071. Space is limited.

Pentecost Celebration

Enjoy a special Spirit-filled worship, including communion, on Sunday, May 24, to celebrate the birthday of the Christian church. Be surprised by what the Spirit has in store!

St. John's Summer Picnic

This year's church picnic, on June 14, will be at Bucky Boyle Park, N. Front Street, Allentown, PA 18102. There will be more information on the picnic in May's Disciple. There will also be a worship service in our church at 10am.

On the Menu

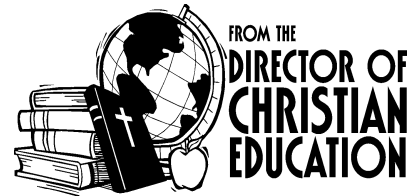
April 26, 2015

**Celebrate spring with some tasty
takeout!**

Manhattan (red) Clam Chowder

Corn Muffins

Fresh Fruit Salad



YOUTH SUNDAY May 31, 2015

Save the date! Our Youth Group is working hard on planning worship for us. They will lead us in worship as well. Pastor Karen gets the day off! Well... from leading anyway! Please plan to support the youth on May 31. This will give you an opportunity to be inspired by their ideas and faith, as well as to get to know them better. You won't want to miss it!

Time to Buy Your Dan Schantz Spring Flowers

Dan Schantz coupons are available for spring. Spend \$10 at Dan Schantz and give them one coupon. Spend \$20, give them two coupons. (Limit 2 per visit.) Dan Schantz returns \$2 to St. John's for each coupon they collect. Coupons are available in the pews and from Barb Silfies in the narthex.

Mother's Day Offering Supports Phoebe Ministries

Phoebe Ministries is a nonprofit organization specializing in health care, housing and support services for senior adults in our area. Affiliated with St. John's and other churches in the UCC family, Phoebe Ministries offers several communities that provide a variety of living options and levels of care to suit the diverse needs and desires of senior adults. These services include long-term care, short-term rehabilitation and specialized programs. St John's church has always been a supporter of Phoebe Ministry and with your continuing support we can help Phoebe continue on their mission as "A community of faith, called by God, to serve the needs and to enhance the lives of our elders, their families and the broader community." On **May 10 we will be collecting our special Mother's Day offering for Phoebe Ministries**, so please remember all the good Phoebe does for our community and please give generously. Thank you.

Great News from Community Bike Works

Earn a Bike turns 20 this year!

Community Bike Works' first Earn a Bike class began in the summer of 1995, and our official grand opening was on September 20 of that year. In our first Earn a Bike class, eighteen young people participated; eleven earned their bicycles. Today, we serve more than 300 students a year in Earn a Bike. In total, in our first 20 years of Earn a Bike; 3,129 young people participated, 2,553 earned their bicycles, more than 80% of all who began the program!

That's a lot of kids, and a lot of bikes! But, as we've been saying for 20 years, what really counts is the story of each student who participated, and the life lessons they learned along the way. Over the next year, we'll share with you 20 (or so) of our favorite stories and milestones from the last 20 years. You'll see how our students have grown up with us (and how our amazing volunteers have grown right along with them), and how we've added programs and expanded our bike shop to better serve our students, and, generally, how we've become the strong and vibrant youth development program we are today.

We'll be planning activities to celebrate 20 years of Earn a Bike over the course of the year, including at least one anniversary bike ride. Our celebration will culminate in March of 2016 with a gala event. Please look for details on all these events. We hope you'll be able to join us!

Happy birthday to Earn a Bike, and many, many more to come! And thanks to you, our friends, for coming along on this amazing ride.

PS. What's your Earn a Bike story? If you have a favorite story or photo we should see from any of the 20 years of Earn a Bike, please share it with us! Email kim@communitybikeworks.org.

Finally, we'll be posting many more photos and stories from our first 20 years on our Facebook page. Please join in the fun at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Community-Bike-Works-Youth-Development-Work-Ethic-Programs/371178296598>.

By Kim Schaffer, Executive Director

Phoebe Home Flea Market

Tuesday, **May 12**, Phoebe will host a flea market in Moyer Hall from 7am to 3pm. Donations are gratefully accepted in the form of housewares, books, CDs, DVDs, toys, games and seasonal decorations. No clothing or large items please. Donations may be dropped off at Moyer Hall during the day from now to Friday, May 8. Any questions, contact Nancy Kramer-Moyer at 610-434-0534.

Altar Flowers for May

The following is the schedule of the altar flowers for May 2015:

- May 3**—"In Memory of Loved Ones" given by the Zeky family
- May 10**—"In Memory of Chet Heinze, Jr." given by wife and family
- May 17**—"In memory of Loved Ones" given by Dick and Jeanette Schmoyer
- May 24**—"In memory of Jean Wieand's May Birthday" given by Donald Wieand
- May 31**—*Available - call the office if you wish to give flowers that Sunday!*

We thank all who have graced our altar with flower tributes!

Communion Offering

A communion envelope is attached that you may use to make your communion offering on Sunday, May 24. All of our communion offerings go toward our Benevolence Basic Support Fund. Contributions to this fund go to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM supports the work of the Penn Northeast Conference and the National UCC Church), Lehigh County Conference of Churches, Phoebe Home and Lancaster Seminary. Please use this envelope for your special communion offering.

A Letter from Our Conference Minister, Alan C. Miller

My Dearest Friends,

Greetings ... My first choice would be to say an individual "thank you" to each and every one of you. But even "thank you" does not begin to express the gratitude that I feel in my heart. Your notes, cards, prayer shawls, prayer squares, hand-made crosses, prayers, meals, texts, and emails have carried me through the most frightening and challenging four weeks of my life. You turned a time that could have been clouded with darkness and loneliness into one of light, hope, and thanksgiving. The last four weeks have been characterized by a depth of spirituality that I have never experienced before, and you played a big part in making it so.

I know many of you have been contacting the office to find out what has happened and is happening. So here it is in a nutshell: Late Sunday evening, January 25, I was rushed by ambulance to the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center. I had a GI bleed and by morning had lost 13 1/2 units of blood. They found the source of the bleed in my colon and stopped it using an embolization procedure. I spent five days in ICU. While in ICU I underwent a series of CAT scans to make sure there were no more places in my body that were bleeding. One of these scans revealed a mass in my chest cavity, and I was diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer called Thymic Carcinoma. This was an incidental finding; it is not related to the bleed.

I was released from the hospital on February 4. February 9 I had a PET scan and met with my oncologist on February 10. I have been on Coumadin for over ten years for another medical condition. My oncologist told us that as they were trying to restart my Coumadin, the PET scan revealed that I now had bleeds in both of my adrenal glands. I was immediately rehospitalized to address this life-threatening situation and as an icing on the cake, during the second hospitalization I developed an abscess on my buttocks.

As of this writing I am doing well. The bleeds are under control. I am being treated for my adrenal glands and I am regaining my strength. In addition to the loss of blood, I lost 21 pounds in the hospital.

Tuesday, March 3, I travel to Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York City to meet with the foremost expert in the country on Thymic Carcinoma. On March 9 I will meet with my oncologist and learn the plan of treatment for the cancer.

In consultation with the PNEC Board of Directors, we decided that we will wait until we learn the treatment plan before we decide the degree to which I will be able to continue to function as your Conference Minister during treatment.

I am filled with hope and a sense of quiet inner peace because of the grace of God as I experienced it in the hospital and in and through each of you.

Even though it does not feel enough---thank you---thank you from the bottom of my heart and the very depth of my soul to each and every one of you.

Peace,

Alan

Our Ministry with Central Elementary

DURING MARCH, ST. JOHN'S MEMBERS GAVE A REMARKABLE 22 PAIRS OF BRAND NEW SHOES TO THE CHILDREN AT CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

A teacher came into the Community Room and was ecstatic when she saw the shoes lined up on the table. "Thank you!", "That's wonderful!" she kept saying. Then she told me that two of the children in her class desperately need a new pair of shoes. "Theirs are so worn that the soles flip and flop when they walk.That's so wonderful! ...Thank you!"

Please see the thank you note from Kristina Schwartz, Central's Community School Director on page 7 of this Disciple.

???? If you had just enough money to buy a can of beef stew OR a stick of deodorant, which would you buy? ????????

FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, WE, AT ST. JOHN'S, ARE IN CHARGE OF COLLECTING 150 BARS OF SOAP OR BOTTLES OF SHOWER GEL.

Our soap/shower gel will be combined with 150 each of toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and deodorant that other groups of Central Elementary Partners are collecting to make kits of hygiene products, enough to give one to each of the 150 fifth graders.

There has already been a contribution of 50 bars of soap, so we need only 100 more. Do you think we can do it?? I do!!

THE DEADLINE FOR DONATING SOAP IS SUNDAY, MAY 10.

Please bring the soap to church and the children will put it in the big Central Elementary Donation Box in front of the sanctuary during the offering.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE BOOK BLAST ON THURSDAY, MAY 7. This would be a good "first-time" Book Blast to come to if you want to see what it's about while helping out some.

ST. JOHN'S MEMBERS ARE CLASSROOM READING BUDDIES

Bonnie Falla, Wendy Williams and Nancy Kramer-Moyer are Reading Buddies to a kindergarten, first grade and second grade class, respectively. Once or twice a month (you can decide with the teacher), we go in and read a book to our class and follow that up with an activity. We've read some Dr. Seuss books and The Rainbow Fish, among others. "Kindergarteners are delightful and eager," Bonnie comments. "I think we would all agree," said Wendy, "that we want to make reading a fun and enriching experience for the children, but, they, in fact, give us so much more in return. It's hugely uplifting!"

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO:

- be a classroom Reading Buddy
- help with the Book Blast
- know more about any volunteer opportunities
- ask any questions about our outreach to Central

PLEASE CONTACT WENDY WILLIAMS AT 484-225-6708 OR windwend1@gmail.com.

ST. JOHN'S IS DOING MINISTRY IN THE HEART OF THE CITY.

DON'T FORGET TO BRING IN THOSE LABELS OR BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION to be given to Central Elementary School to help them raise needed funds. You may bring in any and all types of "education" labels you see on products such as General Mills, Kleenex, Campbell's Soup and Pepperidge Farm. Collection boxes for the education labels can be found in the Great Hall, in the hallway by the door to the back parking lot and in the church office. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ON-GOING SUPPORT!

We Get Thank You^s

Thank you to everyone who has and who continues to respond so generously to Central Elementary's monthly drives and on-going and special needs. We are, truly, making a difference!

Wendy Williams

Dear Friends of Central Elementary School,

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all of your efforts to support Central's March basic needs drive. Because you've come together, 22 students will be able to wear brand new, BEAUTIFUL shoes! So many students come to our school with shoes that do not properly fit or have been so worn that they are literally falling apart at the seams, and I know their faces will light up with joy when they see that someone somewhere has reached out to help them. Once again, St. John's has shown us the power of community, and for that, we are eternally grateful. Your generosity continues to move us all.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Kristina Schwarz

Community School Director

Central Elementary School

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank, we would like to thank you for your donation of twenty dollars.

Because of your caring and sharing, we are able to feed those less fortunate in our community. We are currently serving between 200 and 250 families per week.

Sincerely,
AAEFB



Anniversaries in the coming month are listed on the calendar. But we want to highlight those who are celebrating special wedding anniversaries.

- Doris and Ralph Todd are celebrating their forty-second wedding anniversary on May 26.
- Becky and Jim Bronfenbrenner are celebrating their forty-third wedding anniversary on May 27.

Congratulations and may God be with you as you celebrate this anniversary and the anniversaries still to come.

Open and Affirming???

What does it mean to be an open and affirming church? Is there a difference between "Open and Affirming" and "Open and Accepting"? Should St. John's be an "Open and Affirming Church"?

Please attend Adult Forum April 19 when consistory president Jeff Rissell will facilitate a follow-up discussion on what it means to be an "Open and Affirming" congregation. This conversation was begun January 25 when Reverend Steve Hummel presented a program on ONA.

ATTENTION, ATTENTION!!!

Teachers, parents, volunteers, bakers: We are excited to host Vacation Bible School, July 13-17, once again this year. We will meet for a light supper at 5:30pm and have class from 6 to 8pm. Please consider getting involved and sign up in the Great Hall. We are looking for teachers, class room aids, donations of snacks and dinner food, and people to help with dinner each night.

**THE NEXT DISCIPLE WILL BE SENT
ON MAY 19, 2015.**

The Curtis Fund

The Curtis Fund has been helping members of our St. John's family for decades. This fund assists members in need when they have financial emergencies. It has been an extremely important source of emergency funds for years. We need to grow this fund so we can continue to help our family members.

The fund is supported by contributions from us, the members of St. John's, and the consistory has recently voted to use the profits from future On the Menu sales to augment the fund as well. At the back of the church is a beautiful, handmade church. This church has a slot in its roof for coins and bills (all denominations will fit!!). The church will be placed in the narthex on Sundays so that you can fill it with your loose change and currency.

In search of.....

.....folks willing to host the "fellowship time" after a Sunday service. You do not need to purchase the refreshments. Speak with Lynn Cloak if you have any questions about hosting. Please use the appropriate sign-up sheet in the Great Hall if you are willing to help.

.....folks willing to sponsor the worship bulletin or altar flowers. Honor someone or remember loved ones with a bulletin or flowers. The bulletin cost is \$15 and the flowers cost \$35. Your sponsorship will help defray their annual costs!!! Please see Bruce DeLong or Jeff Rissell or call the church office if you would like to be a sponsor .

Communion

On the first Sunday of each month, if there is no communion during that service, Pastor Karen will offer communion after the worship service. If you desire to commune, meet her at the front of the sanctuary following the service.

Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank

The food bank is in need of the items listed below. The items most needed are written in capital letters. Please keep this list in mind when you are writing your shopping list:

PEANUT BUTTER, MACARONI & CHEESE, TUNA, JELLY, AND CANNED FRUIT, Jell-o, pudding, any kind of canned or dried beans (baked, white, kidney, garbanzo, etc.), soups, canned meats, vegetables and pasta. Monetary donations are also welcome. Your monetary donations enable the Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank to purchase food from the *Second Harvest Food Bank*.

Pathways Donations Needed

Toiletries and personal-care items like shampoo, conditioners, soaps, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving cream, disposable razors, etc. Sample sizes and the types you find in hotels and motels are fine.

BikeWorks

Bike Works would appreciate donations of black marker pens, paints and paint brushes for art, bathroom cleaner, dishwashing soap, paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, old cloth rags, 45-gallon trash bags and rubber gloves.

All of the items listed in the three articles above can be placed in the bins clearly marked and located in the Great Hall.

March	Year to date				Avg. Worship Attendance for Month
	Current	Benevolence	Property	Totals	
<u>2015</u>					62
Member's Giving:	\$13,313	\$5,839	\$0	\$19,152	
Endowment Used:	\$17,583	\$1,200	\$24,435	\$43,218	
<u>2014</u>					82
Member's Giving:					
Endowment Used:	\$15,699	\$5,369	\$0	\$21,068	
	\$13,784	\$1,200	\$20,074	\$35,058	

May 2015



May 21 – Carrie & David Heinze
 May 21 – Allison & Ricky Hausman
 May 26 – Doris & Ralph Todd
 May 27 – Becky & Jim Bronfenbrenner

						1	2
 <p>1 Jean Turton Christopher Gutt Olivia Gutt 5 Alex Cloak 8 Karline Mosebach 12 Ja'syah Kulp 13 Shirley Bartynski 14 Abigail Garrigan 15 Kenneth Fillman 16 Preston McLaughlin 18 John Klingaman Dorothy Filer* 20 Lynn Cloak 23 Charity Hein 25 Sonya Middleton 26 Brenda Schuler</p> <p>*Homebound Birthday</p>	<p>3 9:30a Sunday School. 11:00a Worship 12:00 Fellowship</p>	<p>4 4:00p Disciple Deadline</p>	<p>5 7:00p Elders</p>	<p>6 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>
	<p>10 Festival of Family 9:30a Sunday School 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 9:30a Disciple mailing 7:00p Consistory</p>	<p>13 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>14 Ascension Day</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>
	<p>17 9:30a Sunday School 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 7:00p Benevolence Mtg.</p>	<p>20 7:00p Chancel Choir</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
	<p>Pentecost 24 9:30a Sunday School 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship</p>	<p>25 Memorial Day</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 7:00p Finance & Property</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>
	<p>31 9:30a Adult Forum 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship</p>						

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