

The Disciple



The Good News of St. John soars like an eagle!

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

Volume 23 Issue 33

June 2023

Howdy St. John's Family,

By now, you are pretty used to the fact that I am a little odd, so I am gonna jump right into the letter for the month of June by telling you the story of a sheep named Shrek. Now, Shrek the sheep was a Merino wether sheep born on November 27, 1994. He belonged to the Bendigo Station in Bendigo, Australia, and was one of many sheep that were used to teach high school students about the process it takes to make Marino wool. One day though, Shrek escaped and disappeared up into the hills!

Merino sheep are meant to be shorn annually; sheering a sheep doesn't hurt or harm the sheep in any way, and in fact, many sheep enjoy losing their bulky coat for summertime. Despite the fact that the folks at Bendigo Station searched everywhere for Shrek the sheep, they were unable to find him. Apparently, Shrek the sheep had been using caves as a way to avoid being captured. (This is why he is named Shrek, after the fictional ogre who lives in a swamp and wants to be left alone!)

In 2004, six years after Shrek's disappearance, he made his way back to Bendigo Station covered in over 60 pounds of wool! There was evidence that at one point Shrek had been attacked by wolves who had tried to eat him, but his fluffy wool was so thick that it created a barrier like armor between him and the danger. Interestingly enough, Shrek the sheep became internationally recognized thanks to the Internet, and New Zealand National Television actually broadcast the sheering of Shrek the sheep. (Say that five times fast!) Funny enough, after seeking to be alone for so long, his fame brought him to Parliament where he met Prime Minister Helen Clark in 2004 to celebrate his 10th birthday. Shrek lived to the ripe old age of 16, the average sheep living between 10 and 12 years.

Imagining Shrek the sheep walking through the rough terrain, with the wolves at his back, definitely gave me a, “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil” vibe. There have been a number of memes and jokes made about Shrek the sheep, but my favorite was one person who commented “you don't have to turn hard to survive the wolves, just be really, really soft and fluffy”. Shrek the sheep is a great reminder of Jesus’ message to love your enemies and those who persecute you (Matthew 5:43-48). Shrek is also a beautiful example of how God provides! Have a blessed June!

-Pastor Becky Sausser



Consistory Report

The Consistory meeting was held on May 9 at 7pm in the Trinity Room. Nancy Kramer-Moyer opened the meeting with devotions. The minutes from the April 11 meeting were passed. In the minister's report, Pastor Becky shared that the groups in the building were notified that only church members may use the kitchen; this decision was made in light of some recent issues. St. John's gained another Friend of St. John's person from Zion UCC, Marian Anderson. Pastor Becky presented a Church Transportation Permission Form for Consistory approval; this form grants permission from parents for youth to be transported in vehicles. Pastor Becky also shared a summer schedule to be shared with the congregation highlighting up and coming events, like the church picnic, VBS, St. John's Movie Night, and the PRIDE booth (see *The Disciple* for more information). Pastor Becky was away May 11-18; Rick Guhl served as guest minister and pastoral emergency contact person, thank you Rick! Rick Guhl also suggested that the Consistory share in a book study together, "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going " by Susan Beaumont. We will read the book together and discuss it. The Treasurer's report was discussed and accepted.

Lynn Cloak, Fellowship Chair, reported about the up-and-coming events highlighted in this issue. As Fundraising Chair, Lynn also reported that there is a plan to clean the kitchen for inspection in August. We are planning a Penny Party for October, and a possible sale of some items for around Christmas time. Christian Ed reported that Youth Sunday is June 11. There will be fellowship afterward. The Vacation Bible School planning team met, the theme is Castle Quest, with knights and dragons. VBS is July 15 from 5-7:30pm. Property Committee Chair Jeff Rissell reported that the air-conditioner unit will be installed next week; the old one has been successfully removed. Jeff then presented the estimate for the roof to be approved by Consistory and it was voted on at the Congregational Meeting on May 14. The Building and Property and Finance Committees did a lot of research on this matter and interviewed several roofing companies before reaching this decision.

Under Old Business, Pastor Becky asked if the Consistory wanted to move forward with purchasing mail advertisements and a discussion ensued. It was decided that Pastor Becky will research digital advertisements and report back. Jeff Rissell reported that in his research to add a handicapped parking space to the lot, ADA requirements state that it has to be a space for a handicap van. Cassidy Bell

confirmed this. Trudi Egan reported that Mayor Tuerk has promised we could make two street spots handicap spots for Sunday. Under New Business, Pastor Becky shared that Michael Judkins contacted the church requesting use of the social hall on available evenings to rehearse for his new play about mental illness in young people. Pastor Becky asked if we could allow them to use the space free. Because of the nature of the play, there was a discussion. It was decided that we would ask to be included on their playbill as free advertisement. The next Consistory meeting will be on June 13 at 7pm in the Trinity Room. This will be the last meeting before we break for the summer.

Strengthen the Church Offering

Strengthen the Church Offering will be our Special Mission Offering for June.

Strengthen the Church Offering reflects the shared commitment of the UCC congregations to help one another strengthen their ministry. Funds administered by the National Office are used for leadership development, new church starts, youth ministry, and local church innovations such as online streaming of worship, just to name a few.

Just as the Holy Spirit empowered those disciples to strengthen the early church, we hope that the Spirit might move you today to help strengthen the ministry of the UCC. You may donate anytime in June using your weekly offering envelope, special envelopes found in the Narthex, or the Donate button on our website.

Thank you for considering to help in continuing St. John's support of this vital ministry.

Important Dates:

Worship Information – June Sermons

June Sermons

- June 4- Trinity Sunday
 - Reading 1: Genesis 1:1-2:4
 - Reading 2: John 1:1-5
 - Call to worship: Resources
 - Title: Creation Song.
 - This week we head back to the beginning, before the beginning, as we look at the creation story and study the formula in Genesis 1.
- June 11- Youth Sunday
 - Reading 1: Genesis 18:1-18
 - Reading 2: Mark 9:33-37
 - Call to worship: Resources
 - Title: Aloha, Shalom!
 - This week the youth are planning and leading worship! The theme is “Welcoming”, and what that means!
- June 18
 - Reading 1: Matthew 9:35-10:8
 - Reading 2: Romans 5:1-8
 - Call to worship: Resources
 - Title: The Right Tool for the Job.
 - In our gospel lesson we learn that Christ equips us with what we need, and in our Epistle lesson we see that we are justified by our faith in Jesus!
- June 25
 - Reading 1: Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
 - Reading 2: Romans 6:1b-11
 - Call to worship: Psalm 13
 - Title: Jesus Power.
 - In our gospel we see the calling of Matthew and the healing of a little girl thought to be dead, and in our Epistle lesson we learn how powerful our baptism is!

Summer Dates

- **June 25-** Annual Church Picnic at Bucky Boyle Park
 - Begins after the 10am church service, arrive for 11am, bring swim suits!
- **July 15-** Castle Quest Vacation Bible School
 - VBS begins with a hotdog cook-out in the parking lot; the event is 5-7:30pm at the church.
- **August 12-** St. John's Movie Night
 - Join us for a family friendly movie, popcorn and fun! Then join us again on Sunday for a sermon about the movie.
- **August 20-** Lehigh Valley PRIDE
 - This year St. John's UCC Allentown will join other congregations at the Penn Northeast Conference table!



Announcements:

Bike Works Update

This article has been reproduced with permission from the Community Bike Works April 2023 newsletter.

Girls Evaluating and Redefining Social Standards

This month we held our first GEARSS (Girls Evaluating and Redefining Social Standards) class of the year. This all-girls Earn a Bike class, supported by Women United, the women-led affinity group of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, allows girls to connect with our women mechanics to learn bike mechanics and bike riding. Through GEARSS, we hope to encourage female-identifying students to step outside of their comfort zone, create a safe-space to try new things and show that women are mechanics.

After completion of Girls Earn a Bike, girls are invited to attend monthly GEARSS Circles where they can deepen their relationships with women mentors. Through field trips, STEAM activities, and student-led discussions, girls will be able to build lasting relationships with peers and mentors and develop self-esteem and a sense of empowerment.

Annual Church Picnic at Bucky Boyle Park

This year our annual church picnic returns to Bucky Boyle Park! The picnic will take place on **June 25** following our 10am service. If you aren't able to attend the service, please come for 11am. This is a covered dish social that will include pulled pork and hot dogs, games, beverages, access to the splash pool and the rest of the park! If you are interested in attending, please sign up using the sign-up sheet in the Narthex with the number of people attending and what covered dish you will bring. You may also call the church office to sign up. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Becky or Lynn Cloak for more information.

Castle Quest Vacation Bible School

Join us on Saturday, **July 15, from 5-7:30**, for Vacation Bible School! This year is a family VBS for all ages! Get ready for an epic adventure at Castle Quest Vacation Bible School! We start the night with a delicious cook-out, then we will design shields, sing songs, do crafts, and play games as we learn about God! For safety reasons, **registration is required**. Call us at 610-433-0146 or email us at stjohnsucc2@verizon.net! Registration is due by June 25.

Movie Night at St. John's UCC

On **August 12** join us for a family-friendly movie night! Popcorn and drinks will be provided, so sit back, relax, and enjoy a night of entertainment on us! Then come back the next day (Sunday, August 13) for a sermon on the movie. We will announce the time closer to the date of the event.

Lehigh Valley PRIDE

On **August 20**, St. John's UCC, Allentown, will join with the other Open and Affirming congregations in the Penn Northeast Conference to run a booth at PRIDE! PRIDE this year is held at the Bethlehem Steel Stacks; for more information, please visit the Bradbury-Sullivan Center website or contact the church office.

Wanted: Musicians!

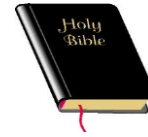
Special Music is what we do in the summer! If you would like to sing or play, talk with Lois to schedule your Sunday. She can help you find music, too.

Live-Streaming

We believe the technical problem with the streaming sound has been resolved. If anyone still has a problem, please call the church office, and let them know.



Lectionary Readings for June 2023



June 4 – Trinity Sunday –

Genesis 1:1-2-4a; Psalm 8, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13;
Matthew 28:16-20

June 11– Second Sunday after Pentecost –

Genesis 12:1-9; Psalm 33:1-12;
Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13-10:8, (9-23)

June 18– Third Sunday after Pentecost –

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7); Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;
Romans 5:1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

June 25– Fourth Sunday after Pentecost –

Genesis 21:8-21, Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17;
Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

June 2023



2 – Ralph Todd
 15 – Richard Schmoyer
 19 – Jared Saylor
 24 – Sarah Shaw
 30 – Mark Strouse

Celebrating 
An Anniversary This Month

				1 Food Bank	2	3
4 11am Worship	5	6 Elders Meeting 1pm	17 9am Prayer Call	8	9	10
11 11am Worship Youth Sunday	12	13 Consistory Meeting 7pm	14 9am Prayer Call	15	16	17
18 10am Worship	19	20	21 9am Prayer Call	22	23 Food Bank	24
25 10am Worship Annual Church Picnic	26	27	28 9am Prayer Call	29	30	

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June – Named for the Roman goddess Maia, who oversaw the growth of plants. Also, from the Latin word maiores, “elders,” who were celebrated during this month

To whoever installed the railing by the steps to the side of the altar, please contact Pastor Becky at 570-581-0594 or revsausser@gmail.com. She needs to ask some questions.

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