

PASTOR'S NEWSLETTER---June, 2011

This past Memorial Day weekend Susie and I were in South Carolina, where I officiated a wedding of the daughter of members from St. Paul, Flemington. One of the highlights was the surprise entrance by a singing Gospel choir, called a "Gullah choir", referring to a culture of African-Americans, descendants of West African slaves, who settled in the "low country" of South Carolina and Georgia. Those slaves worshiped in what were called "Praise Houses", where they met for preaching and praying, consolation and hope. Many spirituals originated in these praise houses, which became places to release feelings of joy, hardship and hope. There are still some standing, but we weren't able to line up a boat to cross over to Daufuskie Island to see the nearest remaining one. And anyhow, no one meets there anymore.

It's a bit less difficult to come to our "praise house" at Gethsemane, or it ought to be. We're not surrounded by water. We've even got air-conditioning. But, of course, it's never been about the building. The Church is about the people. God's people. Privileged to gather together, if only to stay centered and connected to the one true God, so we don't bow down to other gods, or be enslaved to those things that would separate us from a vital, real, deep, lasting relationship with our God. Things like bad habits, pleasure, a thousand and one activities (most not "bad" or "evil" in and of themselves). Our "praise house" can also be more than a place for preaching and praying. It can be a meeting place for refuge and caring and where joy is nurtured.

It can be. And it will be. If you are there. Because Christ promises to be there. (Our building is nice, but not if "no one meets there anymore.")

There's a hymn I hope we shall learn soon, called "Here in This Place" by Marty Haugen. It's a gathering hymn:

"Here in this place, new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this
day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name."

We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry, we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry, called to be light to the whole human
race.

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty, gather us in, the proud and the strong,
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song."

See you Sundays, Pastor Terry

<u>SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE BEGINS JUNE 19: 9:30 AM WORSHIP THIS IS THROUGH LABOR DAY.</u>
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MEMORIAL DAY PARADE AND PICNIC: Gethsemane was well-represented at this year's Memorial Parade in Hackettstown with over 40 participants marching, including some of our preschool children and their parents. And then an even greater number of folk came back to the church for a picnic, with close to 30 "guests". According to Art Stuber, who with Janet Long served as our parade and picnic organizers, one of the guests wanted to know who played the piano for the Lutheran Hour (the religious broadcast we now support on Sunday evenings, 7pm, on WRNJ). Special thanks also to the following volunteers and donors: Juanita and Steve Barna-Providoshin, Evelyn Beegle, Evelyn Bockbrader, Dee Fisher, Jim Dobak, Dave Davenport, Bill and Paula Douma, Al Eikstrems, Erika Everett, Hank and Marlene Kenia, Joyce Kennedy, Janet Long, Charlie and Elna Parke, Peg Pensak, Juanita and Ray Reyes, Sheila Skwirut, Charlie Stackhouse, Art Stuber, Stephen Swanson, Gerard and Maria Tonno, and Eleanore Yurkutat. A special note: Art Stuber helped get the Gethsemane name "out there" with his generous support of 20 10-second radio spots on WRNJ leading up to the parade and picnic.

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL concludes another year this June 12th. We give thanks for the teaching ministry of our teachers and staff: Sue Galloway and Sylvia Allen, co-superintendents; Sandy Anderson, Sylvia and Devin Allen, Mike Appeld, Pete Karcher, teachers.

MUSIC APPRECIATION SUNDAY is June 19. We are grateful for the dedication of all involved in our music ministry, which supports our worship life together. Laura Petrie, our organist/choir director, continues to bring a great spirit and skill in music leadership, and this year has helped form a new adult chime choir, as well as working with our Sunday School children and youth in playing the chimes. Our **vocal choir** members this past year: Linda Lopresti, Paula Douma, Karen Olivieri, Marge Aschoff, Juanita Barna-Providoshin, Susie Herzberg, Steve McLelland, Dave Davenport, Charlie Stackhouse, and Steve Barna. Our new **chime choir** members: Joey Hill, Jon Karcher, Devin and Sylvia Allen, Marge Aschoff, Susie Herzberg, Dave Davenport, Steve and Juanita Barna-Providoshin, Sandy Anderson, Brian and Carol Pietraszkiewicz, Brooke Soper, Justin Hill. Vocal **soloists**: Joanna Petrie, Dave Davenport, Gina Tonno. Well-done, you good and faithful servants!

GETHSEMANE PRESCHOOL holds its "graduation" program this coming Wednesday, June 9, 7pm in the church nave. We have 16 graduates this year. We give thanks for the ministry of teaching carried out by our first-year Director, Mrs. Sue Galloway, and her staff of Marie Isakhower and Kristin Colavito. All members are encouraged to invite your friends with small children to consider Gethsemane Preschool for enrollment in the fall. Note: we will change to a M/W/F (for 4's) and T/Th (for 3's) format in the fall.

THE WOMENS' GUILD 6th ANNUAL RUMMAGE AND BAKE SALE will be held on Fri/Sat, (9am-3pm) June 17/18. If you have items to donate, please call Livia or Al Eikstrems at 908-979-0608 for pickup. You may also call the church office to arrange for a same day drop off at the church, with pickup by the Eikstrems. Donation receipts available.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL will be held the second week of August this summer (Aug.8-12) at Gethsemane. Registration forms will soon be made available. The theme is “Pandamania”, and we’ll focus on Bible stories about creation, Elijah, Jonah, Jesus and Hannah. Themes also include: God made you, God listens to you, God watches over you, God loves you no matter what, and God gives good gifts.

Devin Allen and Pastor are serving as coordinators this year. If you wish to assist in any way, please speak to either of them. We will be holding our first organizational meeting on Sunday, June 5.

GETHSEMANE FOOD DRIVE: Our Board of Social Ministry is coordinating a Food Drive this June to benefit the Trinity Food Pantry. Food bags with a list of suggested and needed foods items are available next to the hallway water fountain. Just fill them and return them to the Church to be placed in designated bins in the hallway. Suggested items to donate: Juices for children, canned beans, canned vegetables, cereal boxes.

THE LUTHERAN HOUR: Gethsemane is now supporting The Lutheran Hour radio ministry on Sunday evenings, 7:00 p.m. on WRNJ-AM (1510), also 92.7 FM and 104.7 FM and streaming at www.wrnjrado.org. Note: if you miss a broadcast, just go the Lutheran Hour website: www.thelutheranhour.org and it is archived. This is intended to be a ministry that connects the unchurched to Jesus and to His church. This support is through a special grant from our NJ District’s CHEF Fund.

WEDDING BELLS are ringing this summer and fall at Gethsemane: Kaaron Swanson, daughter of Jeff and Pati, will be united in marriage to John Yablonski on Saturday, June 25; Stephen Riefler, son of Will and Judy, will marry Christin Kurz on Saturday, Sept.10 at the shore in Mantaloking, NJ; and Alicia Starrett, daughter of Ginger and Bob, will exchange vows with Brian Seidel at Gethsemane on Saturday, Oct.29th. In addition to these member weddings, Pastor Terry officiated the weddings of Alyssa Scala and Michael Halstead (May 15), and Kimberly Selquist and Patrick Legin (May 29), with the wedding of Scott Cartwright and Rebecca Perelka coming on June 26. May God bless the promises these couples make!

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

June 12: Final Sunday School Session/Pentecost Sunday
June 19: Start of Summer Worship schedule of 9:30am services/ Music Appreciation Sunday
August 8-12: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
Sept.11: Rally Sunday/SS starts again
Oct. 20-22: Church Pictorial Directory photo sessions
Oct. 30: CROP WALK for the Hungry

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY: Did you ever see people in church and wonder what their names are? Are you new to Gethsemane and wish you had something to help you put names with faces? Help is on the way.

We've just arranged to put together a church pictorial directory through Lifetouch. There is no cost to you or to Gethsemane to have your photographs taken, and you will receive a complimentary 8X10 portrait and directory for participating. You'll be able to view your images electronically immediately after you are photographed, and have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits.

We've been given three days in October: Thursday, Oct.20 (2:30-9pm), Friday, Oct.21 (same times), and Saturday, Oct.22.

At this point, Pastor is seeking volunteer assistance for the following: Signup coordinators, telephone coordinators, host/hostess coordinators, and layout/design coordinator.

GOLFERS: You're invited to join Bill Everett and Pastor at Shawnee-On-The-Delaware on Sunday, July 24th, teeing off after 1pm for unlimited golf, cart included, cost=\$30. Contact Bill at Beverett@comcast.net or call him at 908.637.6565 for details. We'll play as threesomes or foursomes, regular stroke play, emphasis on fellowship.

VOTERS' MEETING UPDATE: 47 of our members gathered on May 1st to conduct our "family business" in the kingdom of God. Elected to the 2011-12 Council were: Kathy Steinert (Vice-President); Steve McLelland (Fin. Secretary); Sandy Anderson (Treasurer); Toni Torchia (Bd. Of Soc. Ministry, 2-year); Eleanore Yurkutat (Bd. of Soc. Ministry, 1-year), Mike Appeld (Bd. of Property), and Molly Petty (Bd. of Christian Education). The Bd. of Ministry, 1-year position remains unfilled. We thank Syria Geddis, Ed Petrie, Carol Collins, and Janet Long, who served on the Council the past two years. Report highlights: Art Stuber spoke about the \$5200 CHEF Grant from our NJ District to fund one year of broadcasting the Lutheran Hour on WRNJ, and also re: plans for Gethsemane participation in this year's Memorial Day parade; Property: fire alarm system is upgraded; parking lot striping to be completed this month, attic cleanup this summer. Fin. Sec: Giving is up 7.6% over last year's great year. Pastor: Attendance is up from 96 last year and the Prayer Study groups averaged 31 for the six sessions. The Church Council is going to meet bi-monthly on a trial basis, including having each of the Boards meet bi-monthly in the "off-months."