

A note from the Pastor . . .

His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black mud, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy farmer Fleming had saved. "I want to repay you," said the nobleman, "you saved my son's life."

"No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the Scottish farmer replied waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel.

"Is that your son?" asked the nobleman. "Yes," replied the farmer proudly. "I'll make a deal with you," said the nobleman. "Let me provide your son with the level of education my own son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we will both be proud of." And he did just that!

Farmer Fleming's son attended the very best schools and, in time, he graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. He went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin.

Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia. What saved his life this time? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.

Someone once said, "What goes around, comes around." We Christians may call it "The Golden Rule," or as Matthew 7:12 says, "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." This is the foundation of active goodness and mercy—the kind God shows to us every day. Think of a good and merciful action—and then make it happen!

Pastor Carol

**St. John's
United Church of
Christ
223 West College Ave.
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5641**

September, 2012

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"WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN?"

... from the mouths of babes ...

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore, so my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis, too. That's love."

Rebecca – age 8

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

Karl – age 5



"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy - age 4

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

Chris – age 7

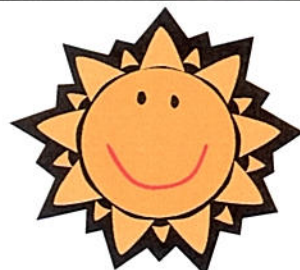
THANK YEW!

... From the United church of Christ National and Global Ministries— a thank you for our gift of \$335 for blankets.

... From the Ohio Conference's Outdoor Ministries - a thank you for our gift of \$324.73 given by the Sunday School classes of St. John's.

HEIFER PROJECT REPORT

To date, \$1677.86 has been donated. Thank you, all you generous folks!



GIVE ME OPTIMISM

A prayer for the ability to choose the sunny side of the street ...

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do your best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. The God of peace will be with you.



Join St. John's for an afternoon at the theater!
\$25 per person includes lunch and the show payable
to Bob Stahl.

Wednesday, September 12



Meet at the church at 9:00 am to carpool.

Please sign up by Sunday, September 9.



CHURCH FOOTBALL

Quarterback sneak – Church members who quietly leave during some part of the service.

Draw play – What many do with the bulletin during worship.

Half-time – The period between Sunday School and worship when many choose to leave.

Benchwarmer – Those who do not sing, pray, work, or apparently do anything but sit.

Staying in the pocket – What happens to a lot of money that should be given to God's work.

Two-minute warning – The point at which you realize the sermon is almost over and you begin to gather up your belongings.

Sudden death – What happens to the attention span of the congregation if the preacher goes into "overtime."

Blitz – The rush for the restaurants following the benediction.

Halfback option – The decision of many members not to return to the church during the week for Bible study, to be on committees, to participate in fellowship opportunities.

St. John's UCC—A family rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and living in love.

The Italian Tomato Garden

An old Italian man lived alone in New Jersey. He wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work as the ground was quite hard.

His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

"Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty sad because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me--like in the old days." Love, Papa.

A few days later he received a letter from his son. "Dear Papa, don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried." Love, Vinnie.

At 4 a.m. the next morning, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. That same day, the old man received another letter from his son.

"Dear Papa. Go ahead and plant the tomatoes tomorrow. That's the best I could do under the circumstances." Love you, Vinnie



BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER

We thank you for the fragrance of a new box of crayons, Lord, the rainbow in each perfect row;

Thank you for each bundle of snowy white notebook paper awaiting fresh possibilities.

May they remind us that you make all things new and bless us with abundance.

Thank you for this ruler; for every eraser that tops every pencil. May they help us remember to measure our blessings but never your boundless love for us;

To allow for the making of mistakes as a normal part of human learning.

As we lay out our new clothes for these first days of school, help us remember to put on Christ each day, too, and to "clothe the naked" as God asked us.

But most, God, help us remember that Jesus is always our best and most devoted teacher—that we never outgrow all his lessons on how you want us to live and to love. Amen.

(by May Lynn Hendricks)



St. John's will celebrate a "blessing of the backpacks" on Sunday, September 16, during worship. All children—please bring your backpacks to church with you!



When does Christian Education stop? **NEVER!**

Make a commitment that will challenge your faith and Biblical understanding as you continue on your faith journey. Church worship is necessary, but you can't interact with others, see other points of view, discuss issues with other Christians.

Sit in on any of the following adult classes:

Sanctuary Class (meets in the sanctuary) – Uses the Adult Bible Studies series, which is designed to help adults understand the meaning and authority of the Bible for Christian life and, this fall they will be studying the Books of Hebrews and Acts. Over the years, the size of the class has dwindled from the 20s to a dozen to now about 5 or 6 regular attendees with frequent visitors. The class is taught on a rotating basis by Sara McCune, Becky Cox, David Herr, and Duane Bollenbacher.

All visitors and/or possible new members are always welcome.

Open Heart Class (meets in Oppermann Hall) - Uses the Adult Bible Series as well.

Richard Jordan's Class (meets in Oppermann Hall in the parlor area) – Uses The Present Word series. They will be studying faith issues—what is faith, who understands it, what does faith cost?

No Name Class (meets in the church parlor upstairs) facilitated by Pastor Carol. The first discussion will be a one-session video entitled New Beginnings which explores the myriad of ways older adults can become involved in new and exciting ministries.

After that, for the next six weeks, the class will be looking at Tony Campolo's Curing Affluence. Tony tackles the issues of our money, our time, and our "stuff."

Children's Sunday School will be taught by Julie Court, our Bluffton University student. They will be using the series Holy Moley which is also a video series with other interactive activities involved. They will study Old Testament people and their stories.

All classes begin at 9:30 on Sunday, September 9. See you there—it's the happenin' place!



Thank you for the lovely 99th birthday cards and phone calls. Each one is appreciated. Your friendship means so much to me. Thanks . . .

Frances Scoles

Thank you for your thoughtful retirement gift to me for all my years of working with pastors, specially Pastor Carol. Please support Sue as faithfully.

Carol Groman

The Holy Alphabet.

Although things are not perfect
Because of trial or pain
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame
Even when the times are hard
Fierce winds are bound to blow
God is forever able
Hold on to what you know
Imagine life without His love
Joy would cease to be
Keep thanking Him for all the things
Love imparts to thee
Move out of 'Camp Complaining'
No weapon that is known
On earth can yield the power
Praise can do alone
Quit looking at the future
Redeem the time at hand
Start every day with worship
To 'thank' is a command
Until we see Him coming
Victorious in the sky
We'll run the race with gratitude
Exalting God most high
Yes, there'll be good times and yes some
will be bad, but...
Zion waits in glory...where none are
ever sad!

"I AM Too blessed to be stressed!"
The shortest distance between a problem
and a solution is the distance between
your knees and the floor. The one who

kneels to the Lord can stand up to
anything. Love and peace be with you
forever, Amen.



10 Signs You Should Not Be Getting Married in a Church

John 2:1-2

"On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples."

Reflection by Lillian Daniel

10 signs you **should not** be getting married in a church

1. You find yourself asking the clergy to take all the references to Jesus out of the service.
2. You find yourself dreading your next meeting with the minister.
3. You find yourself dreading the service, worried that the minister will say something too religious.
4. You disagree with the core values of the church.
5. You find the core values of the church so uninteresting that you can just tune them out, no problem.
6. You are not a member of any faith community and neither one of you intends to be.
7. This location feels like a choice you both are making for somebody else, rather than for yourselves.
8. You and your partner have never talked about religion, and you have serious doubts that you will ever be able to.
9. This experience feels like just another wedding transaction, one more service provider to check off the list.
10. You can't wait for the reception.

[to be continued next month]



COMING SOON: NEW PHOTO DIRECTORY FOR ST. JOHN'S

The Tuesday morning ladies' group has undertaken the project of producing a new photo directory for St. John's. The last directory was done in 2004, so it is time to update our directory. The Lifetouch photo group will be taking the photographs (Lifetouch recently purchased Olan Mills Studios). The photography will take place on Tuesday, November 13, from 2:30 p.m. - 9 p.m., so please plan a time on that day to be photographed. A schedule will be forthcoming—just save the date!

Each family (individual) photographed will receive:

- A free 8 x 10 color photo of their choice
- A free photo directory
- A 20 percent senior citizen discount (60 and over)
- A \$5 off coupon for bringing a food donation for the Bluffton food pantry
- A \$5 off coupon if for scheduling on line (don't panic! - help will be available through the church to schedule those folks who do not have a computer)

PRAYER THOUGHTS

"Prayer must be deeply and intimately tied to our experiences." Is this true or false? How have you experienced this in your life?"

"I learned first that the major function of prayer is not to get answers." Do you agree? Why or why not? What is the major function of prayer?

"One of the most wonderful things about prayer is to understand the utter availability of God and the utter accessibility of God." How have you learned this? How do you think you could learn it?

"As we draw closer to the heart of God, we see how very much God is wounded and hurt by your hurt." Do you believe this? Why or why not?

Faith is the bridge between where I am and the place God is taking me.

CONSISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Secretary Blaine Bauman presented the financial report for July with nothing unusual appearing. Funds to pay for the air conditioning were transferred.

Treasurer Ed Yeager presented the treasurer's report. He mentioned that the church received a \$2100 reimbursement for Pastor Carol's health insurance. Nothing unusual was reported for the month.

Ed Yeager reported that the cost estimate from Mid-American Cleaning to clean the floors and the upholstered chairs in Oppermann Hall is \$1910. A motion was made and passed to have this work done.

There has been a water problem within the past six weeks after a heavy downpour caused water to gather in the kitchen, women's restroom, and the janitor's room. Randy Matter of All Service Aeration and Frost Roofing will be called for help with this issue. Ed Yeager and Tom Benroth will check the spouting along the alley.

The rest room windows need to be frosted. Randy Cox will inform Ed Yeager of the name of the company to do this work.

A church key check is being conducted to determine where keys are and if more are needed.

A discussion arose concerning the purchase of air conditioning units for the nursery and the children's Sunday School room. A wiring check will first be made to determine if this idea is feasible. Three units will be needed.

Sue Hardwick Bauman was hired as the new church secretary.

Barbara Plaughner has resigned as church choir director. It was with regret

that the Consistory accepted the resignation.

The Consistory unanimously agreed to gift the Plaughers with \$1000 for their upcoming VOSH trip to Romania.

Pastor Carol reported that VBS went very well and was a huge success. She thanked everyone involved for their hard work.

Jenny Bracy will purchase gift cards as a "thank you" for Carol Groman and Barbara Plaughner.

Praying for . . .

- Our military personnel scattered all over the world
- Mary Katherine Chamberlain (recovering from various health issues) sister-in-law of Sue Bauman
- Carolyn Gillam (recovering from surgery)
- Others known and unknown to us that need God's healing in their lives
- Cathy Cripe (at home recovering from surgery)
- Kathleen Mikkelsen (recovering from hip surgery)
- Gail Schumacher (dealing with cancer) – cousin of Tom Benroth
- Frank Perz (undergoing radiation) – brother-in-law of Ann Nye
- Kyle (recovering from a heart/lung transplant)



WHERE IS THE SAFEST PLACE IN THE WORLD?

(Statistics don't lie!!)

- 1) Avoid riding in cars because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.



- 2) Do not stay home because 17% of all accidents occur in the home.
3) Avoid walking on streets or sidewalks because 14% of all accidents occur to pedestrians.
4) Avoid traveling by air, rail, or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transportation.



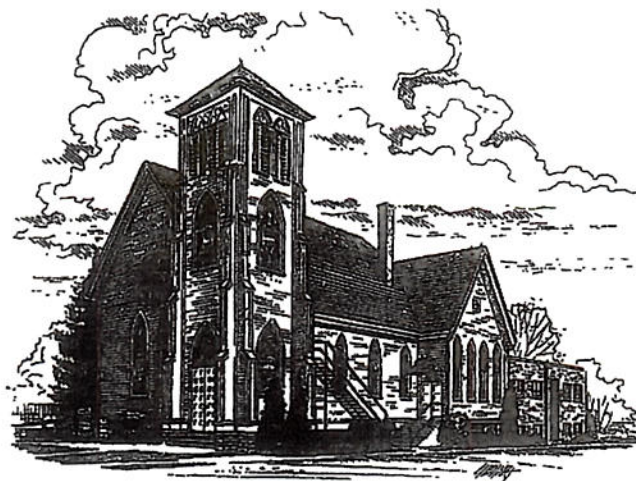
- 5) Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals. So, above all else, avoid hospitals!



BUT . . .

. . . you will be pleased to learn only .001% of all deaths occur in worship services in church, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at CHURCH!

*. . . and Bible study is safe, too! The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less. So, **attend church, read your Bible; it will save your life!***



SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS



9/3 - BECKY COX
9/10 - MARSHA GIVENS
9/16 - MARGARET CARR
*RICHARD AND MARY
ANN JORDAN
9/19 - JACK FIELDS
9/24 - SARA BENSON
9/28 - ED YEAGER
9/30 - BETHANY THEIS

Best Wishes to All!

TIME CHANGE!!!



*All Christian Education classes
will begin at 9:30 a.m. on
September 9.
Worship will be at 10:30 a.m.*

PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

9/2 - Christian Education
(9:30 a.m.)
Worship (10 a.m.)
9/4 - Women/breakfast at the
Mennonite Home (9 a.m.)
TOPS (6:30 p.m.)
9/5 - Men/breakfast at Arby's
(8:30 a.m.)
9/6 - Consistory (7 p.m.)
9/9 - Christian Education (9:30)
Worship (10:30 a.m.)
9/10 - Cabinet meeting (7 p.m.)
9/11 - Women meet at Arby's
(9 a.m.)
TOPS (6:30 p.m.)
9/12 - "Smoke on the Mountain"
trip. Gather at church
(9 a.m.)
9/16 - Blessing of the backpacks
during worship (10:30 a.m.)
9/18 - Meeting with company rep.
for all those involved in the
photo directory (12:30 p.m.)
TOPS (6:30 p.m.)
9/19 - Men meet at Arby's
(8:30 a.m.)
9/20 - St. John's serves community
dinner at Sr. Center (6 p.m.)
9/25 - Ladies meet at Arby's
(9:30 a.m.)
TOPS (6:30 p.m.)
9/26 - Men meet at Arby's
(8:30 a.m.)
9/28 - Wedding rehearsal
9/29 - Kempf/Johnson wedding
(3:30 p.m.)

THE LOVING HUSBAND . . .

A man and his ever-nagging wife went on vacation to Jerusalem. While they were there, the wife died. The undertaker told the husband, "You can have her shipped home for \$5000 or you can bury her here in the Holy Land for \$150. The man thought about it and told the undertaker he would just have her shipped home.

The undertaker asked, "Why would you spend \$5000 to ship your wife home when it would be wonderful to be buried here and you would spend only \$150?"

The man replied, "Long ago a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance!"

Thinking about Labor Day

The Bible affirms the importance of work. Adam was put in the garden "to till and keep it."

In the fourth commandment we are told to "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy." Then we read: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (Exodus 20:8-9 NRSV).

Work is important for us. It allows us to use our talent, our minds and our strength to create and bring forth the "fruits" of our labor. Work satisfies an inner need to make a positive contribution to the world. Work helps to bring satisfaction and fulfillment to us as we use our lives for good and uplifting purposes. It is a way of exercising good stewardship of the personal gifts God has given to us: our brain power, our physical strength, our special talents.

Since we have the privilege of being "workers together with God" it seems fitting that we set aside one day a year to think about the goodness and dignity of work. Therefore, let us joyfully celebrate Labor Day.



Retired Episcopal Bishop thinks UCC is doing something right

Recommend 846 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

Written by Anthony Moujaes
July 31, 2012

'A Salute to the United Church of Christ' is the subject of the latest blog post of Bishop John Shelby Spong, a retired bishop of the Episcopal Church, based in Newark, N.J. In the current entry on his website, *A New Christianity for a New World*, Spong, 81, praised the UCC for its mettle and thanked the denomination's leadership for its insight.

"Perhaps, I thought, this church can be the one Christian denomination that will inspire, bring about and participate in the necessary reformation required to break the Christian faith out of its dying patterns, [it's] no longer believable theological understandings and its medieval worship practices," Spong wrote.

Spong, an author of 22 books that have sold more than a million copies, visited four UCC churches in Wichita, Kan. (Plymouth UCC), Greeley, Colo. (First Congregational UCC), Norman, Okla. (Mayflower UCC) and Hendersonville, N.C. (First Congregational UCC) and said afterward his "appreciation for this denomination soared."



Spong ended his blog with the following:

"These four churches I have described so briefly had several things in common. They each had a well-trained and well-educated senior pastor. Each was linked to a national denomination that encouraged them to press the edges. Each had drunk deeply of that denomination's courage in the public arena on the right side of the cultural issues of our day.

"If the United Church of Christ is represented locally by the churches I have encountered in Wichita, Greeley, Norman and Hendersonville, they must be doing something right.

"So to these churches and to the leadership of the National United Church of Christ, I first raise my hand in salute for your courage and your dedication. Second, I stand before you in awe for what you have meant in my life and in the life of Christianity itself. Third, I bow my head and my heart in thanksgiving for your witness to the Truth."

Read more of Spong's blog praising the UCC.

NEW CHURCH OFFICE ADDITION!

After faithful service to her church, Carol Groman has decided it is indeed time to retire from her position as church secretary. Hired in her place is our own Sue Hardwick Bauman who will keep the office running smoothly. Thank you, Carol, for a job well done, and welcome aboard, Sue!



There is one aspect of Global Ministries that never fails to put a SMILE on our own faces in Global Ministries and on many faces around the world – the Child Sponsorship Program! Disciple and UCC individuals, families, and church groups connect each month with more than 1,000 very special children, providing them with critical elements such as meals, shelter, education, love, and accompaniment through the excellent ministry of 14 child sponsorship sites around the world.

In fact, all of us in Global Ministries harbor a special affection for the Child Sponsorship Program. The home-based staffs in Cleveland and in Indianapolis have done group sponsorships of children over the years. The Indianapolis staff recently got news of their third sponsored child, at the Family Village Farm in India: a little boy named Roghan who turned five on June 20. His mother abandoned the family; his father, who works odd jobs as a painter, could not care for Roghan; neither could Roghan's grandmother care for him. We in Global Ministries are happy to support Roghan with our gifts, our concern, our prayers, and our love.



The Child Sponsorship program has been providing assistance for more than 40 years—one child at a time. If you, your Sunday School Class, youth group or Mission Committee wish to sponsor a child, please [download an application](#).

Or, you are welcome to [give a gift for Child Sponsorship general program](#) in order to allow Global Ministries to continue allocating 100% of monthly sponsorships continue to the individual children.

For more information on the [Global Ministries Child Sponsorship](#)

[Program](#) or contact Linda Lawrence at Global Ministries at or tollfree (866) 822-8224, extension 3222.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS: A GOD IS STILL SPEAKING BIBLE STUDY

Why a Bible study on the Book of Exodus? The short and best answer is that if we want to come to know God – the God of Abraham and Sarah, of Moses and Miriam, of Mary and Paul and of Jesus and the God who is today still speaking—then diving deeply into the Book of Exodus is among the very best ways to do that. The God we encounter here takes risks, is both powerful and vulnerable, and works in surprising ways to fulfill God's purposes. We study Exodus, as we study all Scripture—to hear God, the still speaking God—speak to us in our own time and place.

This 6-session study is written by Anthony B. Robinson, one of today's leading authors and consultants on building leadership in church communities.

Don't stay away because you don't know anything about the Bible! That's why we struggle together to hear what God is saying to us, no matter where we are on our faith journey. See you all then . . .

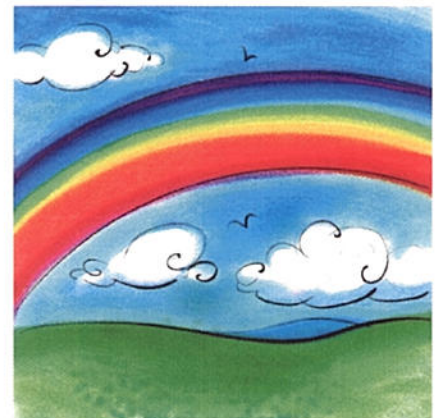
**TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 4,
7 P.M.**

EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE I LEARNED FROM NOAH'S ARK



1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
4. Stay with it, even if you're 600 years old. There is always something big waiting for you.
5. Don't listen to critics—just get on with the job that needs to be done.

6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. Remember! The arc was built by an amateur--the Titanic by professionals.
10. No matter what the storm or when, you are with God. There is always a rainbow waiting.



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Contact Information

Derek Duncan
Program Associate,
Advocacy and Education
Mission Education and
Interpretation
700 Prospect Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
216-736-3220
866-822-8224 ext. 3220
Fax: 216-736-3203
duncand@ucc.org

International Day of Peace and International Day of Prayer for Peace

International Day of Prayer for Peace

The World Council of Churches calls on international churches to pray for peace on September 21 each year. The Day of Prayer for Peace was initiated in 2004 as part of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence, which culminated in 2011 with the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, held in Kingston, Jamaica.

International Day of Prayer for Peace Resources

International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (2011) Hymns and Prayers

Other International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (2011) Resources

Other Worship Resources on Peace



"The Sword of Peace," Sermon by Rev. Dr. Janet Parker

"Their Plowshares are Beat Into Swords," by Prof. Walter Brueggemann

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

21 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUSTAINABLE PEACE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



International Day of Peace

September 21 is also the day recognized by the United Nations as the International Day of Peace. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

"Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future"

In 2012 the international community is focusing on the principle that there can be no sustainable peace without developing a sustainable future for the world and its inhabitants. Social, political and business leaders from around the world met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to renew political commitment to long term sustainable development—to creating "The Future We Want."

For More Information

Global Ministries Global Peace and Human Security Page

United Religions Initiative, International Day of Peace Resources

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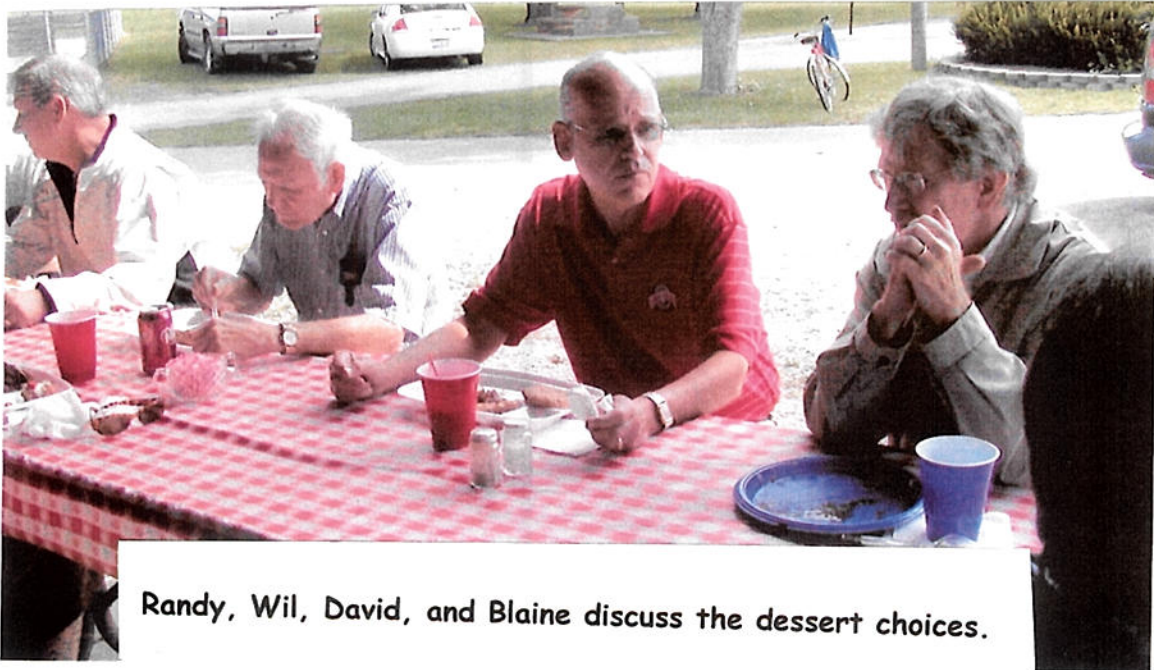
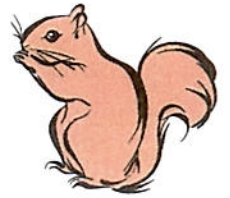
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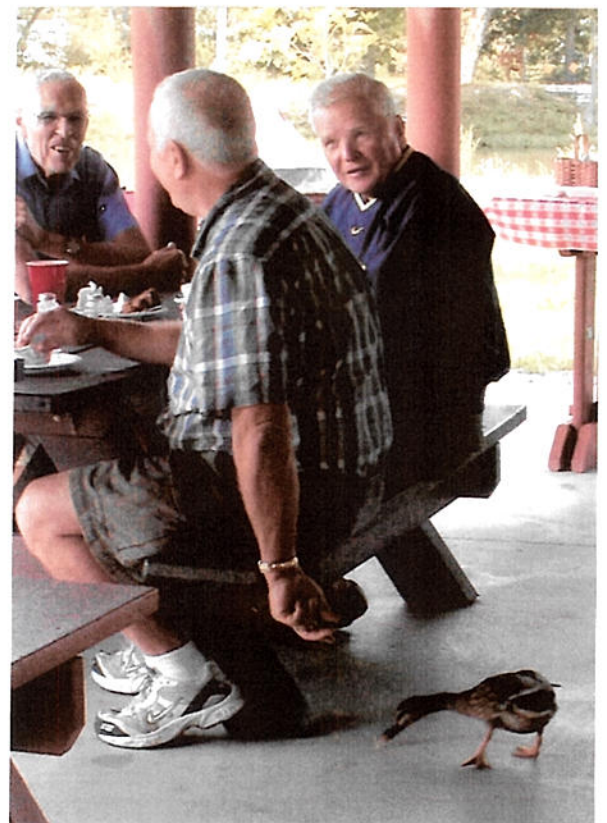
Buckeye Bash!



Randy, Wil, David, and Blaine discuss the dessert choices.



Larry chooses the non-caloric, sugar free, gluten free, lite German chocolate cake.



Can you guess what happened when Tom fed the duck?

All-church worship service and picnic
Sunday, August 19, 2012