

**BRING
ON
THE**



Serendipity

**St. John's United Church of Christ
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5641
June, 2012**

A family rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and living in love.

There's a story of two seedlings which were lying side by side in the fertile, spring soil. The first seedling said, "I want to grow! I want to send my sprouts through the earth's crust above me. I want to feel the warmth of the sun on my face and the moisture of the morning dew on my petals." And so the seedling grew.

The second seedling said, "I'm afraid. If I send my roots into the ground below, I don't know what I will encounter in the dark. If I push my way through the hard crust above, I may damage my delicate sprouts. It is much better for me to wait here and be safe. And so the second seed waited.

A chicken from above the ground came along and was scratching in the early, spring soil looking for food. The first seedling had already taken root and was growing to beat the band. The chicken found the second waiting seedling just sitting there, and it promptly ate the little seedling.

MORAL OF THE STORY: Those who refuse to risk and grow get swallowed up by life.

I share this story with you because *risk* and *failure* are natural qualities of growth. There would not have been a resurrection if there had been no death. There cannot be success in anything without a certain amount of risk and failure. Consider the failures of these famous people who we know in history as successes:

(Continued on next page)

After Fred Astaire's first screen test in 1933, the testing director of MGM wrote, "Can't act, slightly bald, can dance a little." Astaire kept that memo over his fireplace mantle in his Beverly Hills home for a long time.

Louisa May Alcott (author of the book Little Women, among others), was encouraged by her family to find work as a servant or a seamstress.

Beethoven handled the violin awkwardly, and he preferred playing his own compositions instead of improving his technique. His music teacher called him "hopeless" as a composer.

Babe Ruth hit 714 career home runs in his famous career—but he also struck out 1330 times!

During this spring and summer of 2012, don't be afraid to venture into new situations where there is risk involved. It is only through risk that we begin to stretch ourselves and grow just like the first seedling.

In Peter's first letter in the New Testament he writes, "You have been born anew—not of perishable but imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God." (I Peter 1:23). Whatever it is--go for it this spring and summer!

Pastor Carol

WHERE I HAVE AND HAVEN'T BEEN

I have been many places, but I have never been in Cahoots. Apparently, you can't go there alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport. You have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my family, friends, and those with whom I have worked.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I am not too much into physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense. It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart. At my age, I need all the stimuli I can get.

I believe I have been in Quisitive. It is a curious place. Everyone in this place is continually prying into the business of others. I want to know why that is, don't you?

Also, I have visited in Satiabile. I get really hungry there for all kinds of food. The population is really hungry for knowledge of the world when I visit; they ask me all about the inventions of the world; all about the I-pad and the Nook. It is difficult to travel around in Satiabile. Too many inquiring minds and one must have answers, or so it seems.

Now, if I can just avoid getting in Continent!

A Summer Blessing

May you walk with God this summer in whatever you do, wherever you go.

Walking with God means . . .

Walking with honesty and with courage,

Walking with love and respect and concern for the feelings of others.



May you talk to God this summer and every day and in every situation.

Talking to God means . . .

Praying words of praise for the beauty of creation,

Saying prayers of thanks for friends and good times,

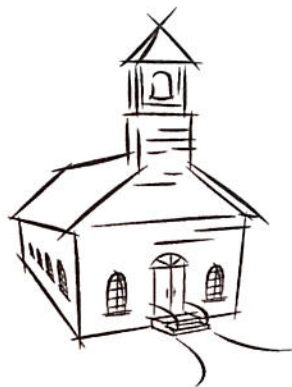
Asking God's help in all your decisions,

Expressing sorrow when you have failed.



May you walk and talk with God every day.

Amen.



If St. John's has become your spiritual home, you are invited to consider the step of membership. Pastor Carol would like to hear from you if you are interested in "officially" joining our community of faith. Call her at the church office (419-358-5641) or her cell phone (330-2024-0802).

WHAT'S GOING ON IN JUNE?

- 6/5 – Women meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 6/6 – Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 6/7 – Community dinner at Sr. Center
- 6/10 – Second Sunday potluck after Worship
- 6/12 – Women meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
– VBS – All churches present (7 p.m.)
- 6/13 – Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
– Ladies' lunch at Casa Lual (meet in church parking at 11 a.m.)
- 6/14 – Consistory (7 p.m.)
- 6/19 – Women meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 6/20 – Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 6/21 – Community dinner at Sr. Center
- 6/26 – Women meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 6/27 – Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)

Pastor Carol will be on vacation from June 16 until July 2. If you need pastoral care, please call Don Rock (567-226-1010) or Eric Rummel (419-302-8877)



We need to pray for . . .

- **Our military personnel**
- **The hungry and homeless**
- **Caregivers**
- **Ron Fleming** (Mary Ann Jordan's brother dealing with arm problems)
- **Carol Wince** (Mary Ann's sister dealing with health issues)
- **Mike Downey** (recovering from knee surgery)
- **Mary Katherine Chamberlain** (sister-in-law of Sue Bauman dealing with infection)
- **Maynard Badertscher**
- **Joyce Badertscher**
- **Julia Gable**
- **Mary Alice Dodge** (undergoing knee surgery June 12)

Just the facts, please!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY CONSISTORY MEETING

Mark Alliman led a discussion and offered information involving our investment funds and the best way to use and/or invest them. A taskforce consisting of Ron Badertscher, Randy Cox, and Pam Everett will meet with Mr. Alliman to further investigate the options. Suggestions will be presented at the Consistory meeting in June.

Financial Secretary Blaine Bauman presented the financial report for the month of April with nothing unusual in the report.

Ed Yeager presented the treasurer's report. April was a big expense month due to payroll taxes that were due. In addition, there were some large copy machine maintenance bills and repairs.

There was a water leak in the boiler. M&R Plumbing has made the repairs.

Ten fire alarms have been purchased and will be installed.

Ed Yeager reported that there is to be a large rate increase in liability and owners' insurance costs to Cincinnati Ohio Casualty from \$2600 to \$5000 per year. During the past 3-year contract with St. John's, Cincinnati Ohio Casualty has been using the wrong table in assessing the premiums. That correction, plus a rate increase, has raised the premium. Ed will investigate other options from other companies.

A sign has been made and posted regarding safety issues on the ramp and the ramp walls on the parking lot side of the church where children have been seen playing and jumping on the walls. A thank you note will be sent to John Hochstetler who donated the sign.

Randy Cox displayed a sample of the windows being considered for replacement in Oppermann Hall. There will be 25 windows replaced with Simonton Windows at an estimated cost of \$15,000. The air conditioning units being considered for installation are estimated to cost \$20,000. These issues will be voted on by the congregation after the May 20, 2012, worship service.

Jason Kindle has transferred his membership to St. John's. Jason is currently enrolled at the Methodist Theological School in Dayton pursuing a Master of Divinity degree with the goal of becoming an ordained minister in the UCC. Consistory has whole-heartedly agreed to support Jason in his efforts.

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – May 20, 2012

A special congregational meeting was held to discuss the vote on the proposal to replace 25 windows in Oppermann Hall (upper and lower levels) with Simonton low emissivity glass windows. The motion to approve this project was unanimously approved by the congregation. The cost of the windows will be \$15,185.00.

The second proposal was to install two Mitsubishi outside multi-zone heat pump units and 6 Mitsubishi indoor high sidewall split air conditioner units at an estimated cost of \$20,000. The motion passed with a vote of 42-7.

The expenses will be taken from the Money Market fund established from the sale of the parsonage. The costs of these projects will leave \$70,000 in the Money Market fund.

Many Thanks . . .

Thank you all so very much for your recent donations to our shelter. Your kindness and support are truly appreciated.

Samaritan House

On behalf of our family, including our son-in-law Rob Peterson, we want to thank all of you who sent us cards and words of encouragement following the death of our daughter, Rev. Kristi L. Foster on March 26, 2012. We know that those expressions of concerns have been able to lift us and our family.

Joe and Barb Foster

Thank you for your outpouring of agape love you have displayed for our Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and the people of Lima we serve. Truly the words of Christ displayed by you have worked to fulfill God's call to help the least and the lost.



CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH . . .

*Denotes an anniversary

- 6/7 Mildred Criblez
*Don and Shirley Rock
- 6/8 Sharlee Badertscher
- 6/9 Carol Jean Bucher
- 6/10 *Larry and Becky
Bucher
- 6/18 Isaiah and Jonas
Kindle
- 6/23 *Sara and George
McCune
- 6/24 Blaine Bauman
*The United Church
of Christ

CONGRATULATIONS!

EIGHT REASONS WHY PEOPLE BECOME GENEROUS STEWARDS

The pastor is providing effective leadership.

People give to vision—not to budgets.

Transformation leads to stewardship. Tithing very rarely comes from the head; it comes from the heart.

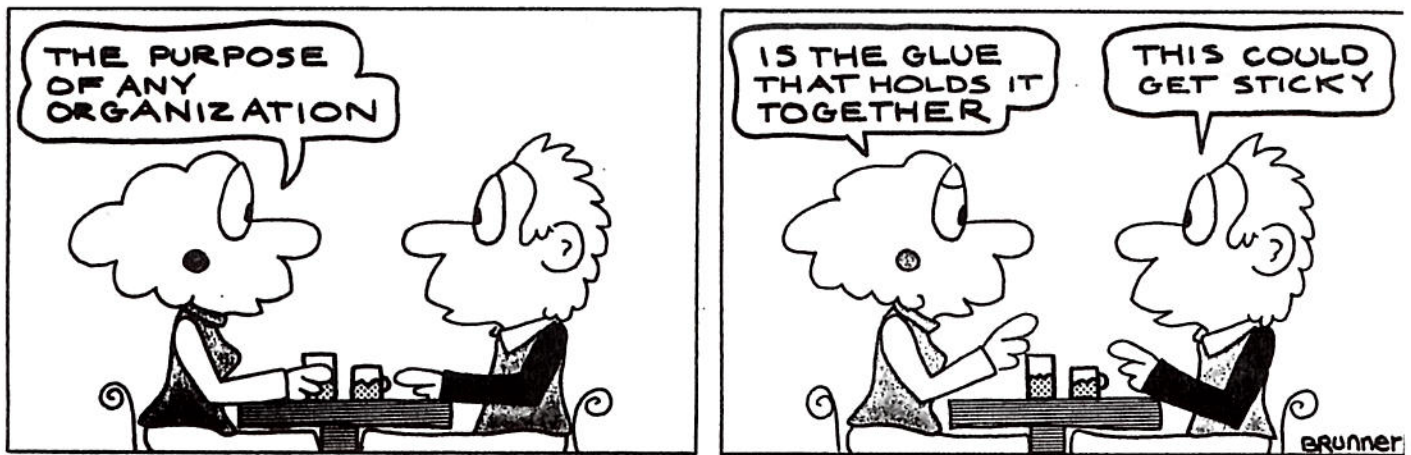
Confidence and pride in one's congregation. If people sense the congregation is on the right track, people will give.

Inspirational worship.

Absence of conflict.

A blend of great commission and the great commandment is necessary for sacrificial giving.

The vision of the congregation is consistently and effectively communicated.



If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there!

- Who are we as St. John's United Church of Christ at this time and in this place?
- What is our purpose/mission as a community of faith?
- How has St. John's helped you experience God and serve God?
- What should we expect St. John's to offer (or continue to offer) as we all seek to fulfill our personal mission as a Christian?
- What do you hope St. John's will be known for in ten years?
- How is St. John's UCC unique?
- What is happening in the church that excites you and wants you to tell others about our community of faith?
- How is God still speaking to you and to our church?

For quite some time now, the leadership of St. John's has been engaged in dialogue about a new mission statement. A vision statement will help us chart a direction for what we do/who we are as well/what we hope to accomplish in the future. A vision statement is a purpose for our being; why are we the "Church?" Christ's ministry is now our ministry because we are the Body of Christ. Persons like ourselves, with all our strengths and frailties, are chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God and to witness to a world of peace, justice, freedom and love which God intends and is bringing into being. How can we/are we being Christ's light for all?

Please take the letters of our name: S-A-I-N-T-J-O-H-N-S—and for each letter, describe who/what we are using that letter. For example:

S –serving others

A – accepting of all

I - inviting others to experience Christ

N – needing to pray for each other

T - teaching the word of God

Etc.

Your "mission possible" assignment is to prepare your vision, dreams, hopes for us as a congregation. From your suggestions, a new statement will be prepared. Don't let us down, fellow sojourners! Please submit your suggestions by July 1. Place them in the offering plate, please! We need all your help to make us the "glue that holds us together!"

SONRISE NATIONAL PARK COMES TO ST. JOHN'S!

The community VBS theme, Sonrise National Park, will invade the whole of St. John's beginning on July 22 and ending on July 26. Representatives from all of the churches have been meeting to make this the best VBS ever—and we need your support as well! In a short time, there will be a list of "park ranger" responsibilities that will be needed to help things run smoothly that week. A sign-up sheet will be forthcoming. In the meantime, we need commitments for the following:

- *Your prayers*
- *A kayak or canoe*
- *Artificial Christmas trees or other artificial trees or plants*
- *Stuffed forest animals*
- *Burlap*
- *Hiking boots*
- *Waders*
- *Fishing poles*
- *Pinecones, horse chestnuts, buckeyes*
- *Small tents*
- *Small logs*

Even though it seems like it is a long time away, we would like to know if you can supply any of the following items. You don't have to supply the item immediately—the committee would just like to know if you can supply any of the following. Committee members include Becky Cox, Jenny Bracy, Penny Kindle, Carol Groman, Nancy Yeager, Pastor Carol.



'The Church White Lie Bridal Cake'

George Goldtrap of Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL, passed on this story, which he titled "The Church White Lie Bridal Cake":

A woman in Alabama was to bake a cake for her Baptist Church ladies' group's bake sale, but forgot to do it until the last minute. She found an angel food cake mix and quickly made it while drying her hair and dressing.

When she took the cake from the oven, the center had dropped flat and the cake was horribly disfigured. There was no time to bake another cake, so she looked around the house for something to build up the center of the cake.

She found a roll of toilet paper, put it in the center of the cake, and covered it with icing. The cake looked beautiful.

Before she left the house to drop the cake by the church and head for work, she woke her teenage daughter and gave her some money and specific instructions to be at the bake sale the moment it opened at 9 a.m. and to buy her cake and bring it home.

When the daughter arrived at the church bake sale, she discovered that her mother's cake had already been sold, and called her mom. Her mother was horrified and spent a sleepless night wondering what people would think of her.

The next day, to get her mind off the cake, she attended an elegant luncheon/bridal shower at the home of a fellow church member.

She didn't like the hostess, whom she considered an upper-crust Old South snob.

She was horrified when her cake was presented for dessert!

She was about to confess to the hostess when the mayor's wife exclaimed, "What a beautiful cake!"

The snobbish hostess grinned with pride and said, "Thank you, I baked it myself."

The true creator of the cake smiled and thought to herself, "God is good."



Missionaries usually serve a term of 3 to 4 years.

Fully Supported Missionaries

Alvarez, Carmelo
Venezuela

Carmelo Alvarez serves the Latin American Evangelical Pentecostal Commission (CEPLA) and the Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela (UEPV) based in Chicago, Illinois. He works as program consultant and visiting professor for the CEPLA and the UEPV.



Barnes, Dawn
Mozambique

Dawn Barnes, a member of the Seventh Street Christian Church, Richmond, Virginia, will serve with the Mozambique Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, based in Maputo, Mozambique. Dawn will serve as an HIV and AIDS Coordinator.



Barnes, Jon
Mozambique

Jon Barnes, a member of the Seventh Street Christian Church, Richmond, Virginia, will serve with the Mozambique Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, based in Maputo, Mozambique. Jon will serve as project and development officer.



Behle, Mark
Lesotho

Mark Behle, a member of The Church of the Palms, United Church of Christ, Sun City, Arizona, serves the Lesotho Evangelical Church. He is a math and religion teacher at Masitise High School.



Byrd, Phyllis
Kenya

Phyllis Byrd, a member of Hollis Avenue Congregational, United Church of Christ, Queens Village, New York, serves the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. She is jointly appointed by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Global Ministries. She works in the networking and advocacy program of the Greenbelt Movement and as the supervisor/coordinator of the youth volunteer program of the Presbyterian Church (USA). She also facilitates assignments of Global Ministries short-term volunteers.



Campbell-Nelson, John
Indonesia

John Campbell-Nelson, a member of Upland Presbyterian Church, Upland, California, serves the Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor. He has taught at the Theological Faculty of Artha Wacana University and its Center for Regional Studies and served as a consultant to the Evangelical Church in East Timor. He provides in-service training and continuing education for clergy.



Chan, Judy

Hong Kong

Judy Chan, a member of Colesville Presbyterian, Silver Spring, Maryland, serves the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC). She is jointly appointed by the Presbyterian Church, USA and Global Ministries. She works as a communications specialist in charge of the ecumenical radio broadcasting ministry and editor of English publications.



Couper, Scott

South Africa

Scott Couper, a member of First Congregational Church, Winter Park, Florida, serves with the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). He assists the Inanda Seminary in strategic planning and serve as a management consultant. He also serves as pastor of the Thafamasi Congregational Church (UCCSA).



Donaghy, Timothy

Nicaragua

Timothy Donaghy, a member of University Christian Church, Hyattsville, Maryland, serves the Christian Mission Church in Nicaragua. He works on church projects in environment, food security, and leadership development and teaches about environmental issues at CIEETS (the Inter-Church Center for Theological and Social Studies).



Frank, Elizabeth

Turkey

Elizabeth Frank, a member of Claremont United Church of Christ, Claremont, California, serves the Health and Education Foundation in Istanbul, Turkey. She work as Co-General Secretary of the American Board in Istanbul.



Frank, Kenneth

Turkey

Ken Frank, a member of Claremont United Church of Christ, Claremont, California, serves the Health and Education Foundation in Istanbul, Turkey. He works as the Co-General Secretary of the American Board in Istanbul.



Henry, Teresa

India

Teresa Henry, a member of Brookmeade Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, serves the Synodical Board of Health Services of the Church of North India. She is an anesthesiologist at the Christian Hospital in Mungeli. Teresa's appointment is supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS).





From – Still Speaking Daily Devotions 5-15-12
 Excerpt from Psalm 93
 "The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty."

Reflection by Quinn G. Caldwell

"I don't need church to experience God; I experience God in the mountains and in the ocean." Whatever.

Is seeing the Crown Jewels the same as seeing the Queen of England?

The Psalmist says that the natural world is the robe of majesty God wears, a sort of regal outfit she puts on to show how great she is. There's nothing wrong with being awed by the outfit, but that's not the same as worshipping the one who wears it.

On the other hand.

Would people still so eagerly seek God in natural places of majesty while ignoring corporate worship if so many church services weren't so utterly devoid of majesty? Because, you know, we don't get to complain about the mountains and the oceans if they're more eloquent on the subject of God's greatness than we are.

Organists and musicians, do you play every piece, even the giant old German hymns, like a funeral?

Scripture readers and liturgists, are you unrehearsed and unprepared (and therefore unsupported by the clergy that recruited you), and so do you read the most important words in the world in a flat, halting, deathly boring tone?

Clergy, do you schlump around up in the chancel like an affable host inviting people to play a parlor game? Do you sound apologetic and embarrassed when forced to talk about God's awesomeness?

Everybody, have you felt even the slightest twinge of awe in your church lately?

If not, the mountains win again.

Submitted by: *Pastor Don Rock*

Actions that build a Friendly Church

Pray for each other. Be open to share your needs. Then in time others will be open to share their needs with you. Praying for each other is living on a deeper level of life. It is the level we should strive to be on with each other. It verifies our love and care for each person. It lifts us up when we are down. To get to this level we must first ask for prayer when we need it. In a simple way share with your friends that you could use their prayers. "It's been a tougher week than normal, I could use your prayers." When you are the first to share your prayer needs, in time others will follow your prayer example, and come to you with their prayer needs. In your conversations with people be aware of their comments that imply they could use your prayers. When they mention that things are tough, tell them you will pray for them.

From: Richard Liedke, How to be a Master Greeter, Used with permission.

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As electioneering gets closer . . .
 "Once a senator, who was trying to convince the president of his loyalty in spite of his refusal to back the White House on a difficult vote, said "Sir, I'd jump out of a plane without a parachute if you said jump, but . . ." At that point the president leaned forward and said, "Jump!" "The senator changed his vote."

Pastor Don, retired



"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted . . ."



**Good times shared
at the
Mennonite Memorial Home!**





**BANNER
COMMITTEE
DOES IT
AGAIN!**

These two banners were begun last October and focus on the Sacrament of Baptism. The first centers on twelve horizontal stripes, a shell, and three droplets of water. The central image is the shell representing Jesus, the droplets representing the Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit), and the twelve stripes represent water in different depths and currents as well as the twelve disciples.

“You are my chosen ones, I call you by name” will mirror the first.





GRACIOUS GIFT GIVEN

Have you seen the beautiful, hand-molded crosses in our sanctuary and in the church front garden? They are the gracious gift of Steve Neff from Lima. Here is what Steve has to say about his crosses:

"I have been making crosses since high school. The largest cross is in Archbold, OH, and weighs 400 pound and is 20 feet high. In the past, I have donated crosses in Dayton, Sidney, and Bluffton. Some of the smaller crosses I have sold at church craft fairs. Most of the crosses I make use an angle iron mold. I enjoy having a hobby that glorifies God."

THANKS, STEVE, FOR SHARING YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS WITH US!



Silly hats—and even sillier little boys—but they're ours and we love 'em!
Jonas Kindle, Ian Kindle, Isaiah Kindle, Henry Jordan, and Liam Jordan.