



St. John's United Church of Christ

SERENDIPITY

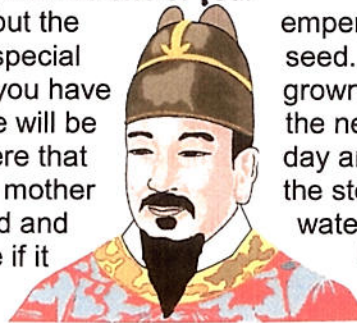
A family rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and living in love.

A word from Pastor Carol . . .

An emperor in the Far East was growing old and knew it was time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or his children, he decided something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day and said, "It's time for me to step down and choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you!"

The children were shocked, but the one of you a seed today—one very special here one year from today with what you have what you bring, and the one I choose will be

One boy named Ling was there that He went home and excitedly told his mother planting soil, and he planted the seed and he would care for it and watch to see if it the other youth began to talk about growing.



emperor continued. "I am going to give each seed. I want you to plant it, and come back grown from this one seed. I will then judge the next emperor.

day and he, like the others, received a seed. the story. She helped him get a pot and watered it carefully and faithfully. Each day had grown. After three weeks, some of their seeds and the plants they were

Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing grew. Three weeks turned into four weeks and four into five—and still nothing! Ling felt like a failure as all of his friends talked about their plants growing. Six months went by—still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. He had nothing.

After the year had gone by, all the other youth of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot, but she insisted that he be honest with the emperor and take his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the others. They were beautiful, and they came in all sizes, shapes, and colors. Many laughed at Ling; some just felt sorry for him.

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people present. Ling just tried to hide in the back of the group. "My goodness! What trees and plants you have grown!" said the emperor. "Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!" All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified! "The emperor knows I'm a failure; perhaps he will have me killed!"

When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked his name, and Ling told him. All the kids were now laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold, your new emperor!" Ling couldn't believe it; his seed didn't grow at all. How could it be that he was chosen to be the new emperor? The emperor spoke. "One year ago, I gave you all a seed and told you to plant the seed and care for it, and then bring it back to me today. But I gave all of you boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my original seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"
(continued on next page)

May, 2012
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If you plant dishonesty, you will reap distrust. If you plant selfishness, you will reap loneliness. If you plant pride, you will reap destruction. If you plant bitterness, you will reap isolation. If you plant gossip, you will reap enemies. If you plant worries, you will reap wrinkles. If you plant sin, you will reap guilt.

So—be careful what you plant now. It will determine what you reap tomorrow. The seeds you now scatter will make your life better or worse. Someday, you will enjoy the fruits of your labor or you will pay for the choices you make. May all of your plantings be done in honesty, love, faith, and hope. Happy gardening!

Pastor Carol



Consistory Highlights . . .

Treasurer Ed Yeager reported that the basement door was paid in full (\$1862 for the door and \$50 for lock maintenance). This door was paid for by several fundraisers held by the Women's breakfast group.

Ed also was concerned that only his name appeared on the Edward Jones accounts. He will have the necessary paperwork prepared to have the name of the president of Consistory also added to the account.

Pastor Carol discussed her installation service and thanked everyone for their help in making it a success.

Ed Yeager presented quotes for air conditioning in the sanctuary and window replacement of the classroom windows in Oppermann Hall. The contractor for the window replacement is M&W Construction Inc., from Lima, Ohio. Total cost: \$15,885.

The air conditioning will be installed by M&R Plumbing from Bluffton. On the recommendation of M&R, there would be two air conditioning units outside the sanctuary and six wall units inside. Total cost: \$17,975. Ed suggested that we use funds from the sale of the parsonage for both of these projects. Any monies contributed by the congregation toward the Window Fund would also be used for replacing the windows. The motion was made and passed to proceed to take the proposal to the congregation for discussion/approval. A special congregational meeting will be called for May 20 after the worship service for this action.

Smoke detectors will be purchased and placed throughout the church.

Steve Kindle stated that the Board of Christian Education has requested that outside nursery help be paid because it is so difficult to find volunteers to stay with the children. After discussion, a motion was made and passed that nursery help be paid \$20 per week. The funds would come from the Current Fund.

An outdoor clean-up day has been scheduled for Saturday, May 5, at 9 a.m.

MAY CELEBRATIONS

*Denotes an anniversary

May 1 - Donivan Montgomery

May 2 - Maynard and Joyce
Badertscher

May 5 - Edith Murray

May 6 - Diana Reichenbach
Sara McCune

May 14 - Tom and Linda
Benroth*

May 17 - Richard Jordan

May 19 - Betty Moser

May 31 - Dottie Long

Congratulations!

*Blessings and best wishes go out
to our college graduates - - -*

Taylor Cox
Bluffton University

Carl Scoles
Ohio State University



A Daily Examination of Grace

Paying attention at the end of the day

*Invite the Christ, Light of the world,
to walk with you as you reflect on the
past twenty-four hours and gently
sift through the events of your day.*

Give thanks for some gift of the day.

Celebrate God's empowering love at a time
or times when you were loved or loving.

Notice some struggle of the day. At times
when you noticed some unrest in your
soul—something unresolved—when you felt
less than loving—celebrate God's
undefeated love, and hear the Christ say, "I
know you and I love you."

**Ask God for a specific grace for the day
ahead.** You might pray for patience or to be
forgiving. If you have a difficult meeting or
task ahead of you, you might pray for
discernment.

**Hold before the mind's eye what your life
would look like if that grace were
granted.** Place in your mind a "hidden
video" at home or work. See yourself in the
situation you thought about above; think
about yourself as already "whole" and
resting in God's shalom—which is how
Christ sees you!

**What do you want to happen
tomorrow as a result of events that
happened today? How can you make
tomorrow a better day?**

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

Scriptural references:

II Samuel 22:31

Proverbs 3:5

Hebrews 2:13



ME: *(in a tizzy): God, can I ask you something?*

GOD: Sure.

ME: *Promise you won't get mad?*

GOD: I promise.

ME *(frustrated): Why did you let so much stuff happen to me today?*

GOD: What do you mean?

ME: *Well, I woke up late,*

GOD: Yes,

ME: *My car took forever to start,*

GOD: OK . . .

ME: *(growling): At lunch, they made my sandwich wrong and I had to wait.*

GOD: Hm

ME: *One the way home, my phone went dead just as I picked up a call.*

GOD: All right.

ME: *(loudly): And to top it off, when I got home, I just wanted to soak my feet in my foot massager and relax, but it wouldn't work. Nothing went right today. Why did you do that?*

GOD: Well, let me see . . . the death angel was at your bed this morning and I had to send one of the other angels to battle him for your life. I let you sleep through that.

ME: *(humbled): Oh . . .*

GOD: I didn't let your car start because there was a drunk driver on your route that might have hit you if you were on the road.

ME: *(ashamed):*

GOD: The first person who made your sandwich today was sick and I didn't want you to catch what he had; I knew you couldn't afford to miss work.

ME: *(embarrassed): Oh . . .*

GOD: Your phone went dead because the person that was calling was going to give a false witness about what you said on that call; I didn't even let you talk to them so you would be covered.

ME: *(softly): I see, God.*

GOD: Oh, and that foot massager—it had a short that was going to throw out all of the power in your house tonight. I didn't think you wanted to be in the dark.

ME: *I'm sorry, God.*

GOD: Don't be sorry—just learn to trust me—in all things, the good and the bad.

ME: *I WILL trust you, God.*

GOD: And don't doubt that my plan for your day is always better than your own.

ME: *I won't God, and let me just tell you God, thank you for everything today.*

GOD: You're welcome, child. It was just another day being your God. I love looking after my children.

May Calendar of Events at St. John's

- 5/1 - Ladies meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 5/2 - Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 5/3 - Community dinner at Senior Citizens' Center
- 5/5 - Spring cleanup day outside at St. John's
- 5/6 - Communion served
 - Trout derby
 - Bluffton University graduation
- 5/8 - Ladies meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 5/9 - Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 5/10 - Consistory
- 5/13 - Geraniums planted after worship
- 5/15 - Ladies meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 5/16 - Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 5/17 - Community dinner at Senior Citizens' Center
- 5/20 - Baptism of Cameron Cox during worship service
 - Congregational meeting after worship
 - Potluck luncheon after worship and meeting
 - Heifer offering collected
- 5/22 - Ladies meet at Common Grounds (9 a.m.)
- 5/23 - Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)
- 5/27 - Board of Christian Education meeting after worship
- 5/29 - Ladies meet at Common Grounds
- 5/30 - Men meet at Common Grounds



The Price of Freedom

In the song, "What Did He Die For?" Twila Paris reminds us why we observe Memorial Day and why we worship Jesus as our Savior. The first verse tells of a 21-year-old soldier fighting for America's freedom during World War II. The second verse recalls another young man, many centuries prior, sent by his Father to win eternal freedom from sin for the entire world. The chorus offers us this challenge:



*"What did he die for when he died for you and me,
Made the sacrifice so that we could all be free?
I believe we will answer each to heaven
For the way we spend a priceless liberty.
Look inside and ask the question: What did he die for?"*



Memorial Day challenges us to live so as to honor the sacrifices made by members of the military. We value our freedom because of the heavy price people have paid for it. Likewise, every day we're challenged to live so as to honor Jesus' supreme sacrifice. He calls us to spend our "priceless liberty" using our blessings to bless others.

MOTHERS WILL ALWAYS BE MOTHERS . . .

Columbus' Mother: "I don't care what you've discovered; you still could have written!"

Michelangelo's Mother:
"Can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?"

Abraham Lincoln's Mother:
"Again with the stovepipe hat? Can't you just wear a baseball cap like the other kids?"

George Washington's Mother:
"The next time I catch you throwing money across the Potomac, you can kiss your allowance goodbye!"

Thomas Edison's Mother:
"Of course I'm proud that you invented the light bulb. Now turn it off and get to bed!"

Paul Revere's Mother: "I don't care where you think you have to go, young man, midnight is past your curfew."

Albert Einstein's Mother:
"But it's you senior picture. Can't you do something about your hair?"



Five-year old Timmy's mother loved him very much, and she was quite the worrier. Naturally, when it came time for him to start kindergarten, she was very concerned. She walked him to school for a few days but, finally one day, Timmy protested. He didn't want her to walk him to school any more; he wanted to be like the "big boys."

Being the over-protective mother that she was but still wanting to give her son the freedom he requested, she asked her neighbor, Mrs. Goodnest, if she would keep an eye on him, following from a distance so he wouldn't realize he was being watched and followed. Since Mrs. Goodnest was up early anyway, she said that this would be a good time for her to take her toddler for a walk, and so she agreed to keep a protective eye on Timmy.

She and her daughter Marcy followed him faithfully every day for a week, watching Timmy and the youngster with whom he walked. One day, the friend said to Tim, "Have you noticed that lady following us all week? Do you know her?"

Timmy nonchalantly replied, "Yea, I know who she is. That's just Shirley Goodnest." "Shirley Goodnest? Who the heck is she?" the little friend inquired.

"Well, Timmy began, "every night my Mom makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayer 'cuz she worries about me so much. In it, the prayer psalm says, 'Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life,' so I guess I'll just have to get used to it!"



CHURCH GOES *WILD* FOR VBS!

You read it right! From July 22-26, St. John's will be transformed into *SONRISE NATIONAL PARK* as we host the Bluffton Area Ministerial Association's community Bible School. We hope to take our children to Sonrise National Park to help them get started on a journey that will last the rest of their lives. It is our goal to teach our children that no matter what extreme challenges may come their way in life, they will have the indescribably, all-powerful, unchangeable, unwavering Jesus to guide their way. It is here in the park that the kids will discover that they can go beyond what they think they know to discover what is essential and true.

The children will learn about true peace (Jesus is loving and powerful and he will help them); true riches (Jesus knows what kids need and will provide what is best for them); true power (Jesus shows them how to depend on the power of God's Word when they are tempted to sin); true love (Jesus loves each one of them so much that he died and rose again so that they could become members of God's family); and true hope (kids can be fearless about the future because Jesus is always with them and has a plan for them). Children will learn through Bible stories, crafts, games, snacks, and music.

The Board of Christian Education knows that this event is still a long way off, but we will need lots and lots and lots of help and helpers, and the Board would like you to think about some way in which you may be able to make a contribution to his wonderful ecumenical, community effort. In the next column will be some items that you might consider lending us for our props/decorations.

Hope to see you all at
SONRISE NATIONAL PARK!

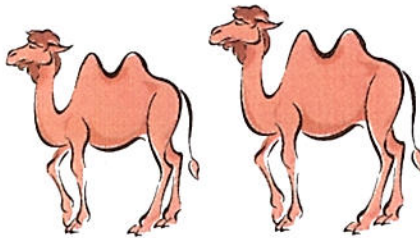


- Your prayers
- A kayak or canoe
- Artificial Christmas trees or other artificial trees or plants
- Stuffed forest animals
- Burlap
- Hiking boots
- Waders
- Fishing poles
- Old sheets that can be painted on
- Pinecones, horse chestnuts, buckeyes
- Small tents
- Small logs
- People to help decorate, paint, walk children from class to class



Marks of a Healthy Congregation

- Healthy congregations accept differences
- Healthy congregations focus on their strengths
- Healthy congregations focus on mission
- Healthy congregations respond to anxiety and change
- Healthy congregations manage conflict
- Healthy congregations act flexibly and creatively
- Healthy congregations, leaders promote health through their presence and functioning
- Healthy congregation, leaders challenge people
- Healthy congregations, leaders provide immunity capacities
- Healthy congregations, people respond graciously and truthfully
- Healthy congregations, people develop caring relationships
- Healthy congregations people empower others
- Healthy congregations recognize the Creator's interdependent design of life
- Healthy congregations practice stewardship gratefully and willingly
- Healthy congregations combine money and the Christian Life
- Healthy congregations, people share their lives
- Healthy congregations offer hospitality to all
- Healthy congregations understand beginning again is a way of life



Alice is on the move thanks to all of you!

On behalf of the Board of Christian Education and all of you who have made donations and purchased baskets at our recent ladies' tea, our Heifer project is now totaling a whopping--

\$1338!

We say Thank You!

Wouldn't it be nice if we could buy Alice a friend—Arnold—and they would have baby cameletts! What do you say we go for it . . . ?

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

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How Is Your Congregation's Health?

While every congregation is unique, congregations fall into three broad categories of health: healthy, intentional, and fragile. Within these three health categories are ten specific types.

Where would you place your congregation's health?

Healthy Congregations

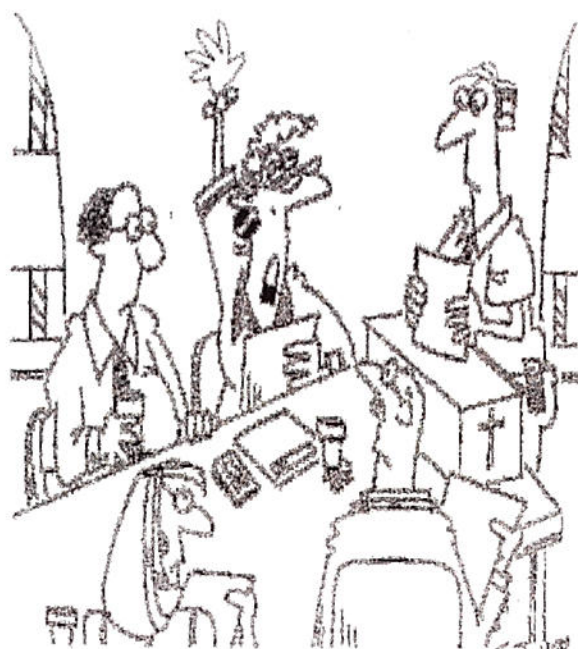
While not perfect, these congregations recognize and capitalize on their strengths. That factor alone is often all they need to move to a healthy operating level. Healthy congregations are well past survival mode. They possess a well-articulated focus on the future, and their budgets reflect their priorities. They embrace change. Every year, they add a few ministries and abandon others, according to their members' gifts and their communities' needs. Equipped with these values and behavior habits, these congregations maintain their health in a variety of different ways.

Teaching/Modeling Congregations are creative, independent thinkers. They maintain their health by focusing on Godly things and staying away from distractions. Often excelling in certain ministries, they may be a leader in one or more specific aspects of ministry (such as tutoring or hospital follow-up) and not realize it. Their leaders and members may take for granted or under-estimate their church's strengths and abilities. But neighboring congregations are typically aware of these strengths and learn from this teaching/modeling behavior. Teaching/Modeling congregations compare well to the Church of Smyrna, "... you are rich." (Rev. 2:9, NRSV). These churches do not try to be all things to all people, but they are clearly God's letter to certain people.

Leadership Congregations prize their leadership position among neighboring congregations and within their denomination. Populated with long-tenured members, they embrace the values and achievements of previous generations. Their members look beyond the local church for places to make a difference nationally and internationally. They regularly hold new member classes, promote giving to denominational offerings, and mirror the espoused values of their heritage. Their commitment to furthering the works and ministries of previous saints propels them. Leadership congregations echo the Church

of Pergamum—"...you are holding fast to my name...." (Rev. 2:13). Mission-minded globally and locally, they regularly develop new disciples of Jesus Christ who are committed to their congregation's ministry priorities. They supply judicatory and denominational leaders and benefit from those relationships.

Networking Congregations maintain their health by relating to like-minded churches. Some of them develop membership in networks, such as *Willow Creek* in Chicago. While teaching congregations tend to underestimate their potential for growth, networking congregations tend to over-estimate their potential. Because of that, these churches are vulnerable to conflict. While both teaching and networking congregations reflect the Church of Smyrna, networking congregations might benefit from the instruction to Smyrna, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer." and, "Be faithful until death." (Rev. 2:10). Judicatories can be a catalyst for relationship building, spiritual formation, and accountability.



LET'S FOCUS ON OUR STRENGTHS...OUR LIST OF WEAKNESSES IS A BIT LENGTHY FOR ME TO REMEMBER!

Intentional Congregations

These congregations plan, set priorities, or unleash energy to strengthen the sense of community among their members and discern where God is leading. Typically, these churches have used some type of internal reflection or congregational assessment to learn their strengths and problem areas. They know where they are, where they would like to be, and are working on a strategy to get there. Intentional congregations come in two forms, those that are learning more about healthy congregations and those that are striving to become one.

Transforming Congregations are on their way toward becoming healthy congregations. Their people have attended church-health conferences, read and worked through resource materials-together, and started to implement the principles that they gained. Transforming congregations reflect the Church of Philadelphia—"If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; and you will never go out of it." (Rev. 3:12). These churches' needs are specific—such as the ability to normalize conflict and to receive encouragement as obstacles appear that threaten their effectiveness.

Learning Congregations have arrived at the key recognition that they cannot continue doing the same things over and over and survive. This understanding is the beginning of all transformations. Prior attempts at renewal looked like a solo leader's efforts that were too far ahead of the rest of the congregation, or the acquiescence of a small group of people who believed that they were doing the judicatory a favor by attending the latest church renewal seminar. Obtaining congregation-wide ownership and commitment to renewal is critical.

Fragile Congregations

These churches may exhibit few vitality signs, and they typically are unwilling to invest in the learning and work required to become a healthier congregation. Less-healthy congregations come in five forms, outlined below. Some are unaware of, or in denial, about their changed environment, think a quick fix will do it, and are blocked from considering transformation due to distractions. As the Church of Laodicea discovered when they were told, "...because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15).

Stalled Congregations display many signs of vitality, but have become routine and lost energy. Their primary distinguishing mark is that they have neither abandoned nor added new ministries in the past five years. They may still be doing some excellent ministry. But without a constant flow of new ideas and relinquishment of old ones, they soon find themselves battling more over their assets and properties than over the quality of their ministries.

Technical Congregations look for a quick fix to achieve congregational health. They are convinced that the right approach, a key program, or an insightful conversation with someone "in the know" will launch their congregation into a pathway of renewal. They view transformation as following the right steps rather than adapting sound principles. Technical congregations may emulate other churches, but more often, they seek to add one or more new programs as their silver-bullet to success. Like the Church of Thyatira, their "love, faith, service, and patient endurance" and their recent ministries may be "...greater than the first." (Rev. 2:19).

Isolated Congregations may be in the "middle of nowhere" geographically, or in the heart of a city. Most members drive in from other neighborhoods. In either case, they have largely cut themselves off from the community. Like the church of Sardis, they must "Wake up, and strengthen what remains..." (Rev. 3:2) or eventually face death. Isolated congregations display amazing resiliency, but find vitality difficult when cut off from the world. Until these churches sense urgency and request assistance, denominational staff can do little to assist with change.

Distracted Congregations, like the Church of Ephesus, have "...abandoned the love you had at first." (Rev. 2:4). They pay too much attention to internal conflict, the pain of a former disappointment, or the antics of a resident antagonist. As a result, they have forgotten how to do effective evangelism, discipleship, and worship. Common reasons for their denial and distraction crop up—a controlling patriarch or matriarch, an angered family, a previous split, clergy misconduct, tragic loss, or a revered leader who never left the congregation. Often in a co-dependent relationship with their distractions, health eludes them until these issues are addressed.

New Congregations, often defined as churches established within the past five years, are by their nature also fragile. Encouragement, support, and appropriate challenges from their regional denominational leaders can help to counter this fragility. New congregations need to stay focused on ministry. They are most effective when they only develop the minimal organizational structures and systems necessary to support their growing ministries.

Note: Go to "Free Resources" on the www.TheParishPaper.com Web site to download resources for these congregational categories and types titled A Typology of Congregational Health.



An action that builds a friendlier church.

When meeting someone for the first time – **Listen, Learn** and **Repeat** their name. Center your conversation on them. Immediately after, write their name and review it during the week. Next time greet them by name.

One major reason we do not reach out to people is that we have a failure image. We imagine we will forget their name right after we hear it. But that can change if we **LISTEN, LEARN, and REPEAT** their name. Concentrate on capturing their name. Remember it is the most important thing you can learn about them. It is the most important thing they want you to know about them. Repeat their name after they say it. It helps you to get it right. It shows you are really interested in them. Use their name at least three times during your conversation with them.

After you part, write their name down. Have a pen/pencil ready to do this. Review their name many times during the week. Pray for them during the week to help you remember their name. Next week seek them out and call them by name.

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



"Praise the Lord! Praise God in the sanctuary; praise God in God's mighty firmament!" Psalm 150

Reflection by Quinn G. Caldwell

When the ancients tilted their heads back and contemplated the night sky, they were filled with the same kind of wonder you are when you do the same thing. Which is why they thought God lived up there.

But they hadn't seen nothin' yet. Twenty years ago today, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched. Take a minute right now and do a Google image search for "Hubble." Those are real. The universe actually looks like that. Just try to look at those images and not praise the Lord in the firmament.

Now do an image search for "Hubble ultra-deep field." All that you see there exists in a field the same size as a 1mm by 1mm piece of paper held up a meter from your face. Because of how long it took the light of those celestial bodies to reach us, seeing them is like looking back 13 billion years.

One of the best lines in all Christian hymnody is from "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee": "Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began." Go back and look at those images again. Those stars have been chanting "Holy, holy, holy" since time began. Don't you think you ought to join in?

From; Still Speaking Daily Devotional, 4-24-12

When I saw these photos, I could not help but think of these words from the *Messiah* by George Handel;

"And the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed."

Pastor Don Rock retired

**Gracias—
and thank you,
too!**

I want to thank everyone for the prayers and cards I received during my knee surgery. What a blessing to have so many friends!

Betty Moser

Many thanks and blessings for all the prayers, good wishes, cards, meals, and love shown me (us) throughout this past winter. Everything has been so much appreciated!! Pray this is all . . .

Love to all, Mary Ann J.



**Summer church
times change
June 3!**

**9 a.m. – Sunday School
10 a.m. - Worship**

**IS GOD STILL
SPEAKING TO YOU
IN YOUR LIFE?**

**We're looking for some
God stories . . .**

"Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" says Jacob in Genesis 28:16. Many times God comes near to us, and we are so busy, so preoccupied, so set in our ways, or so caught up in our own agenda that we don't recognize God; we don't sense God's presence in our lives.

However, there are also other times in our lives when we feel the power, the grace, the love, the forgiveness, the healing of God—one of the "AHA!" moments in our lives when God becomes real for us—that we need to share that experience with our fellow Christians as we all walk our faith journeys.

Do you have a story, incident, moment, that you would like to share when God stepped into your life and made God's presence known to you? Write it down to be published in the *Serendipity* or tell Pastor Carol you would like to share it during a time in the worship service. Let us hear that God is still speaking in your life!



**A Race Worth
Winning!**

Each year, the Samaritan House of Lima houses many, many homeless women and children. Help is needed to get them "back into the race of life," and that is where we who wear the title "Christian" can help.

The **UNDY 500** will again be sponsored by the Board of Christian Education. They will be asking for donations of women's and children's socks, underwear, and diapers for babies. Please remember that all items must be new and wrapped. Thanks for helping us get these folks on the road again . . .

VOSH/OHIO – Twenty Five Years of “Sight Seeing” Opportunities

In 1987, Dr. Darrell Groman, O.D. and two other optometrists founded the Ohio Chapter of Volunteer Optometric Service to Humanity. Shortly thereafter, the Eyeglass Sorting Center was established in the basement of the Pandora United Methodist Church.

In twenty-five years the Pandora Eyeglass Center has received over 2.2 million used eyeglasses from Lions Clubs, granges, churches and individuals. These glasses are pre-screened, washed, prescription determined, and then filed numerically.

The volunteers take these recycled glasses as check-on luggage to third world countries. They pay their own way. They take twice the number of glasses, versus the number of patients they expect to see. There is no way of knowing ahead of time what number of prescriptions will be needed. Oftentimes 6,000 glasses are taken. Through the years, each mission has averaged 3,000 patients, possibly helping up to 90,000 persons.

Over 1/3 of each team are optometrists who examine patients individually and prescribe each prescription. Volunteers, called ‘the Pickers’, select glasses from the inventory; and fit and adjust the glasses to each patient.

There have been 30 missions conducted by VOSH/OHIO as listed with duplicate trips noted in parentheses: Guatemala (2), Nicaragua (3), Mexico (2), Honduras (4), El Salvador (1), Peru (1), Dominican Republic (5), Ecuador (1), Venezuela (1), Haiti (1), Poland (1), Romania (2), India (2), Tanzania (1), and Ukraine (3). Missions to Central and South America last 8 days, while Eastern Europe span 15 days.

After the first few missions led by Darrell Groman, Barbara Plaughter has since been the coordinator for VOSH/OHIO missions. She is also the editor of the VOSH/OHIO newsletter. She has been on 14 missions, and Arliss has been on 13 missions with VOSH.

The Groman family has participated on missions that total (in parenthesis): Darrell (12), Irina (4), Morris (12), Carol (8), and Krysten (1). These missions make it possible to aid people with visual needs, make new (and keep) old friendships, and enjoy ‘sight-seeing’ opportunities.

Upcoming missions being planned are Romania, Panama, and Poland. Volunteers often stay in private homes, Lions’ members homes, ‘two star’ hotels; school dormitories and even, a some volunteers did stay in a Catholic convent, and in a nursing home in Poland.

Submitted by Morris Groman, May 1, 2012

George McCune gets "eggsighted" as Ed Yeager dishes up the vittles.



A growing boy (Ben Theis) needs a hearty breakfast to start the day.

MEN ON A MISSION!

Everyone present for the men's Easter breakfast did not go away disappointed. Good food and a good time was had by all. Thanks, guys!



Dr. Matt practicing his catering skills.



EASTER JOY!

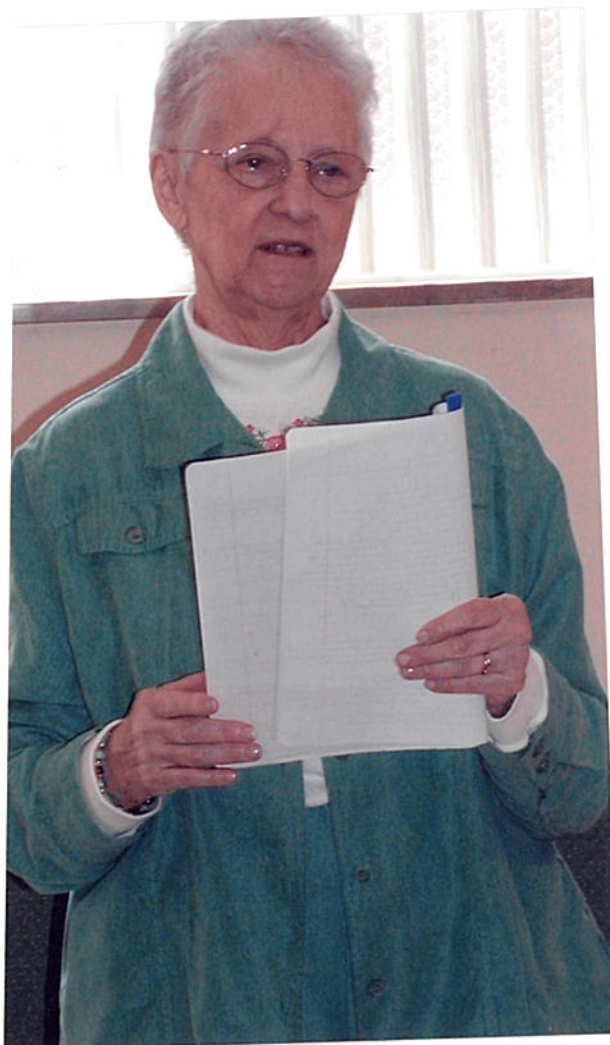
Easter bags and Easter treats are enjoyed by our children: Peyton Worcester, Landen Worcester, Abby Parkins, Liam Jordan, Henry Jordan (peeking over brother Liam's arm) and Dyllan Worcester.



Lindsay Theis looks like she held her own against all those boys in the egg gathering time. Brother Ben looks on, as do Jonah Kindle, Isaiah Kindle, Ethan Johnson, and Blaine Trutt.



A tisset, a tasket; many, many baskets . . .



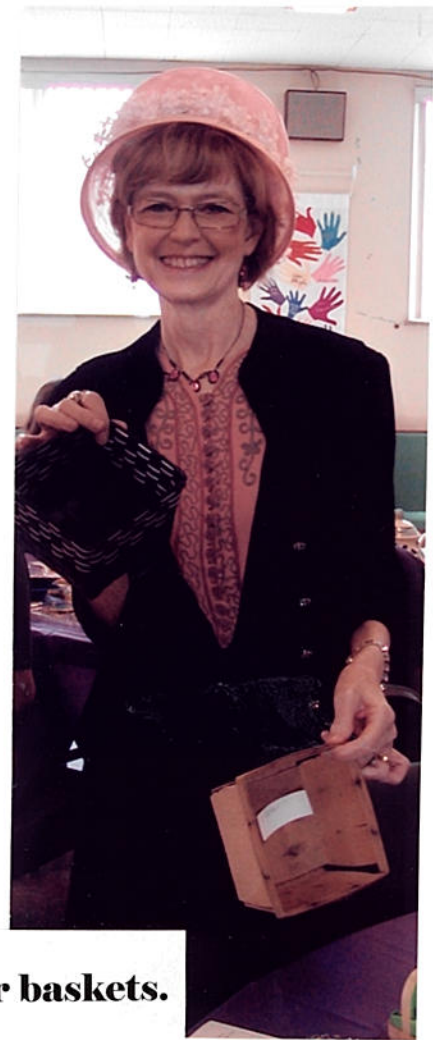
**Our fearless
basketeer leaders—
Shirley Rock and
Mary Ann Jordan**



**One little, two little,
three little baskets
and more . . .**



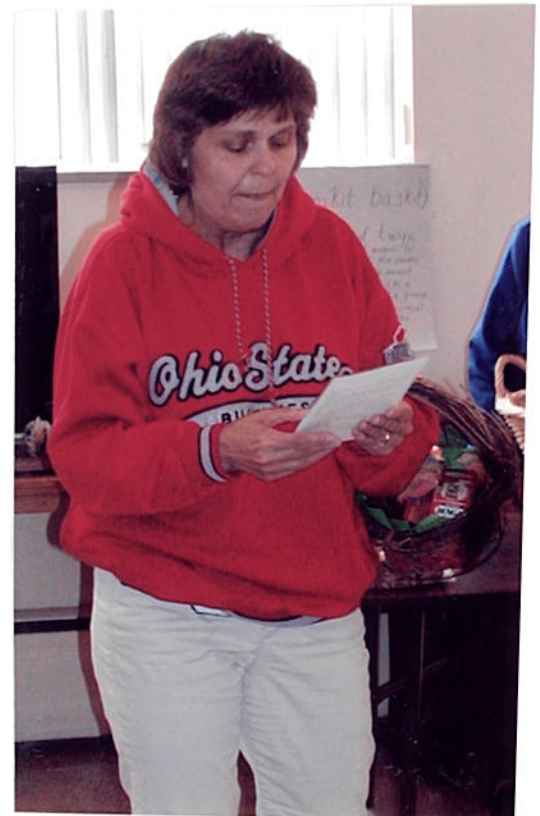
Putting “all their eggs in one basket,” as well as solving all the problems of the world are Sue Amstutz, Sue Bauman, Betty Moser, Mary Alice Dodge.



Terri Downey displays her baskets.



Sharing a funny moment are Penny Kindle and Marci Stahl.



“Little Rap Riding Hood” is led by by our own rap artist, Pam Everett.