



STREAM LINES

A Monthly Publication of the First Presbyterian
Church of Avenel, New Jersey

July/August 2014

SUMMER BREEZE MAKES ME FEEL FINE
BLOWING THROUGH THE JASMINE IN MY MIND

From the Pastor

July/August 2014

LIVING TOGETHER AS FOREIGNERS AND STRANGERS

Then the LORD said to him (Abraham), "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there." (Genesis 15:13)

As you go about your daily life, do you ever feel like you're a stranger in a strange land? It's a sense that you don't fit in, like you're just a visitor. Your ways of being are different from that of the world around you. Its ways are not yours, and yours are not its ways. As curious as you might be, you won't be a party to the huddle of gossipy whispers. In fact, if you're there as the juicy talk begins, you're conspicuously silent, or slip away as inconspicuously as possible to do something more productive. You may consciously pass on a TV program, movie, radio personality, or book that everyone's talking about because to partake in such things is inconsistent with your identity, your primary identity with and allegiance to Jesus Christ. You may keep a daughter from wearing a certain outfit because it doesn't honor her true beauty as a beloved child created in God's image, and because it could result in others objectifying her. You may model for your son the importance of keeping his word, even when it hurts or is inconvenient. You may set Sunday aside as a holy day, for worship, fellowship, and rest with God and others. If you choose to do such things, you will likely find yourself set apart from the culture at large. You will be noticed, and you may be the object of ridicule or rejection. In a sense, you'll be exiled. Isn't that what ultimately happened to Jesus, who was killed for opposing the ways of the world — because He was from a different world, a better, perfect world, the world of God's Kingdom. Where God reigns, there is peace and joy, there is justice. In a word, love reigns supreme.

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July 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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August 2014						
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31						

The brilliant C.S. Lewis, the former staunch atheist turned follower of Jesus Christ and defender of the faith, came to understand the Christian life as one of being a stranger and alien in the world, just like the author of 1 Peter. In Lewis' book, *The Screwtape Letters*, he presented a series of thirty-one letters as if written by a senior demon in Hell named Screwtape, to his less experienced nephew Wormwood. In those letters, Screwtape counseled Wormwood on (mis)leading a person toward "Our Father Below", Satan, and away from "the Enemy", God. The stakes increased when the person, referred to as "the Patient," became a Christian.

Here's a slice of Screwtape coaching Wormwood on ways to lure a Christian away from Christ (parentheses mine):

The routine of adversity, the gradual decay of youthful loves and youthful hopes (of Christians), the quiet despair (hardly felt as pain) of ever overcoming the chronic temptations with which we (demons) have again and again defeated them (Christians), the drabness which we create in their lives and the inarticulate resentment with which we teach them to respond to it – all this provides admirable opportunities of wearing out a (Christian) soul by attrition.

If, on the other hand, the middle years prove prosperous, our (demons') position is even stronger. Prosperity knits a (Christian) man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it', while really it is finding its place in him.

His (the Christian's) increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth which is just what we want.

See how subtly and seductively the Evil One operates? It's helpful for us to be aware of this. It's also helpful to remember, as Peter pointed out to the early Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, that we are not alone. We share a common identity in Christ knitted together in love with Him and others who genuinely believe in and follow Him. Our identity with the King whose kingdom is not of this world is what makes us strangers in the world. We are residents of a world where God's love, peace, joy, and justice reign supreme, and for all eternity. That's the promise and Living Hope of the Gospel, of abundant life. We're in this together, folks. Ever accompanied and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are strangers — foreigners, aliens, pilgrims, exiles — waiting, desiring to return home to our heavenly Father, and living as though we're there. As Lewis put it, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world" (*Mere Christianity*). Keep the faith, friends! Have a great summer, and please keep current your service and giving!

Bob Louer, Pastor

STREAM LINES INFORMATION

The deadline for the September 2014 issue of Stream Lines will be Wednesday, August 20, 2014 at 12:00 noon.

Remember to email your articles to:

Susan Smolsky at streamlines@comcast.net

From the Editor



The September issue will be available for pickup in the Sanctuary on Sunday, August 31, 2014. It will also be available for online reading and printing on or about Wednesday, August 27, 2014.

If you are receiving a paper copy and would like to view the newsletter in color, please visit <http://avenelpresbyterianchurch.org/newsletter>. All online issues are in color.

KICK-OFF SUNDAY

Sunday, September 7, 2014 – Mark Your Calendars!



MILTON

Vacation Bible School 2014

JULY 28th thru AUGUST 1st
9:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Weird Animals:
Discover the Unconditional Love of Jesus!

Opportunities to Serve

VBS is in the planning stages. We're excited about our adventures in Weird Animals where we will learn about the unconditional love of Jesus!

We are asking for people to serve and help make our VBS the wonderful program it has been in previous years. If you serve, I know you will find it a rewarding experience.

Mark your calendars and keep the dates of July 28th thru August 1st available. See Carolyn Gilligan and she'll sign you up.

Thank you for your continued support of our youth!

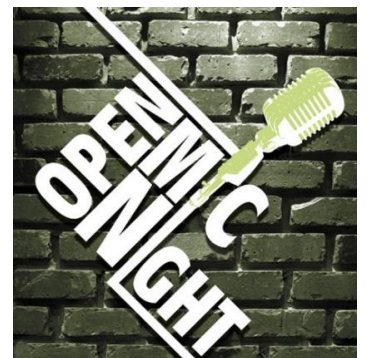
Open Mic Night

Saturday, July 19, 2014 – 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Café Z from Zion Christian Church will host an Open Mic Night in Jacob Morgan Hall on Saturday, July 19, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. An Open Mic Night is where participants perform on stage by singing, playing instruments, etc. The Zion Christian Church is currently being renovated due to damage from age and weather and has requested the use of our facilities.

The charge to all is \$5.00 each at the door. The Zion Christian Church will donate all funds collected to our church, and Café Z will provide snacks and coffee.

Open Mic Night is open to the general public, so come on out – and bring your friends!



CHRISTIAN

EDUCATION

COMMITTEE

The Christian Education Committee would like your help with the following 2 projects for the upcoming Sunday School year. Below is a list of supplies needed for these projects.

Operation Christmas Child

Shoe boxes filled with personal items are given to children in need.

Stand for Children Backpack Campaign

Backpacks are given to children in foster care. When children are removed from their homes, they often leave without being able to take their belongings with them, so the backpacks are very important to them.

We will use this as a lesson for our Sunday School children in reaching out to other children who are less fortunate.

Help us make this a success. We will be putting up a display with a collection basket in the Sanctuary and reminding everyone about these projects during the summer months.

The items needed are:

bath towels
washcloths

toothbrushes
toothpaste

shampoo
school supplies

small toys
books

socks
undershirts

We will put the boxes and backpacks together in the fall with all the items that are donated.

Thanks for your support with these worthy projects.

Blessings,

Belinda and Shirley

Election and Installation of Deacons

During the Sunday morning worship service on June 15, 2014, the following officers were installed as Deacons of The First Presbyterian Church of Avenel:

Millie Knotts
Gayle Nolan
Carolyn Stockl





GRADUATIONS

Our heartiest congratulations go out to the following graduates:

REBECCA TARBY graduated from Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University, and received a Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.) degree, majoring in Musical Arts/Teacher Education-Instrumental/General. Rebecca is continuing her studies at the Peabody School of Education at Vanderbilt University to earn her Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree.

SARAH BENKERT graduated on May 15th from The College of New Jersey with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education.

JOHN ALTIERI graduated on May 18th from Rutgers University in New Brunswick. He majored in Criminal Justice and Psychology.

CAITLIN MEEHAN graduated on May 19th from Montclair State University.

MATTHEW OLAH graduated from North Warren Regional High School in June and will be attending Centenary College in the fall. Matthew is the grandson of Robbie Olah.

ANDREW MARSHELLO graduated Cum Laude from Seton Hall University with a degree in Honors English and Philosophy.

CHRISTIAN MARSHELLO graduated from Colonia High School and will be attending Middlesex County College in the fall.

ERIKA FERRIE graduated on May 22, 2014 with a Master's Degree in Social Work from Fordham University, School of Social Service.

JACLYN FERRIE graduated Magna Cum Laude on May 16, 2014 with a Bachelor's Degree from Boston University, School of Management.

NNAMDI USUWA graduated from Stockton College in New Jersey, majoring in public health, and is pursuing a career in physical therapy.

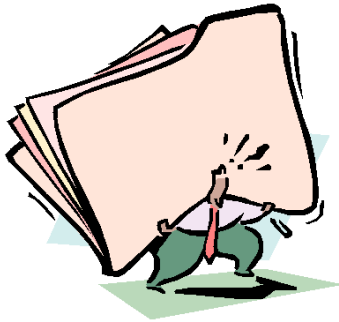
VINCENT COUGHLIN graduated Magna Cum Laude from Seton Hall University. Vincent is the grandson of Barbara Ciocchi.

NICHOLAS COUGHLIN graduated from Woodbridge High School in June and will be attending St. John's University in the fall. Nicholas is the grandson of Barbara Ciocchi.

ERIKA HALLENBECK graduated from Middletown High School South and will be pursuing a degree in Music Education at Montclair State University in the fall.

ANNA HALLENBECK graduated from Thompson Middle School in Middletown and will be attending Middletown High School South in the fall.

AMBER BOROWSKI graduated from Woodbridge High School and will be attending Rutgers University in the fall. Amber is the granddaughter of Vilma Ambis.



Minutes of the Special Congregation Meeting First Presbyterian Church of Avenel

June 1, 2014

The special meeting of the Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, Avenel, NJ, was opened with prayer by Moderator Rev. Robert C. Louer III at 11:30 a.m.

The Clerk verified that a quorum was present. (10% of active membership (19) plus Moderator and Clerk as per By-Laws 2/12/2012)

Elder Bruce McKee, Nominating Committee representative, presented the following members nominated to serve as Deacons:

Millie Knotts – 6 month term (class of 2014 replacing Mary Ann Miller)

Carolyn Stockl – 2 year term (class of 2015 replacing Joan Collins)

Gayle Nolan – 3 year term (class of 2016)

Those nominated were escorted out of the Sanctuary, and the Congregation voted unanimously to accept our new Deacons. They were congratulated upon returning to the meeting.

The meeting was turned over to Charlie Kurowsky, Stewardship Committee chair.

Rev. Louer encouraged the Congregation to read the latest issue of Stream Lines in an effort to understand the Stewardship Committee's purpose for this meeting.

What does each church committee need from the congregation? The committees will be asked to compile a list and submit it to the Stewardship Committee.

We should look at sharing our time and talents not as a chore, but as a way to serve the Lord.

The church is running about \$16,000 behind. We have about \$105,000 in reserve. This gives us about 3 years. We have had a decrease of income, but our spending is under control. We need to figure out how to increase income. A study was made of the 2013 income (see PowerPoint slides 1 and 2 below) by the treasurer and financial secretary.

2013 Annual Giving by Decile (groups of 10 envelopes) PowerPoint slide #1

Divided into groups of 10:

20 envelopes were responsible for 73% of the giving.

30 envelopes gave \$3.03 per week or less

50 envelopes gave \$8.43 per week or less

70 envelopes gave \$85.08 per month or less

PC(USA) statistics of giving:

The average amount given per year (from PC(USA) statistics 2012 of churches the same size as ours) was \$1990.00 a year per worshiper. Our average: \$1290.00 a year per worshiper.

OUR PROBLEM IS A GIVING PROBLEM.

Stewardship is also looking for ideas to make money as well.

We as a church are running out of time.

Everything we receive comes from God. It is up to you as members to decide what it is you will give back to our Lord.

Comments/Questions:

Numbers on PowerPoint reflect those who are actually giving through envelopes.

\$127,610 given in 2013 through envelopes.

Part of the problem is that those who were in church today have left already. We need to be able to reach people to stir their sense of loyalty to our church.

We've received very significant estate gifts and continue to receive them. This masks the situation that we are in right now. If those gifts had not been given, we would be very close to closing our doors.

What about the task force on property? First meeting is next Thursday 6/5/14.

Pastor Louer: not only a financial issue: heard talk about being anxious to grow in numbers and finances, and to contribute time and talent. This is an issue of faith and trust. Everything we have comes from God. Every one of us is on a fixed income. God provides for our welfare and gives us enough to share with others. God asks us to take the top 10% off that provision to give back to Him. We need to give this FIRST, not LAST after the bills are paid. It is an act of faith. With this act, our faith grows. This is not dues. We are giving back out of gratitude and joy. This is between you and God.

Summer months: It's important to keep up giving while you are away. We still need to pay our bills. Can this be mentioned on a regular Sunday when everyone is here? Rev. Louer plans on this. It is also our responsibility to mention this to others who are not present. The Session will also be discussing how to get the word out to those not present.

It was moved and seconded that the Congregational meeting be closed. Moderator Bob Louer closed the meeting in prayer at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Darla Hunt
Clerk of Session

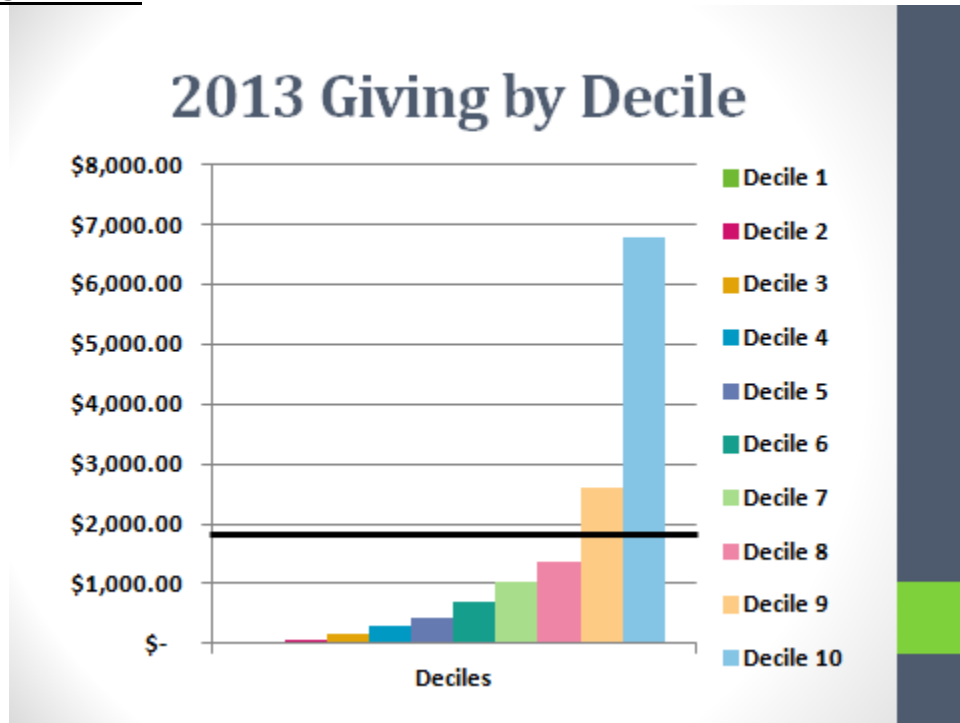
Rev. Robert C. Louer III
Moderator

POWERPOINT SLIDE #1

The table displays the 2013 Annual Giving by Decile. It is a 10x5 grid with columns for Decile, Decile Avg \$/YR, Decile Avg \$/Mo, Decile Avg \$/Wk, and % Total Giving. The data shows a clear upward trend in giving as the decile increases, with the 10th decile contributing 53.14% of the total giving.

Decile	Decile Avg \$/YR	Decile Avg \$/Mo	Decile Avg \$/Wk	% Total Giving
1	\$14.20	\$1.23	\$.28	.12%
2	\$68.80	\$5.73	\$1.32	.54%
3	\$159.30	\$13.28	\$3.03	1.25%
4	\$293.80	\$24.48	\$5.65	2.30%
5	\$438.30	\$36.53	\$8.43	3.43%
6	\$705.64	\$58.80	\$13.57	5.53%
7	\$1,021.00	\$85.08	\$19.63	8.00%
8	\$1,365.90	\$113.83	\$26.27	10.70%
9	\$2,590.64	\$215.89	\$49.82	20.30%
10	\$6,781.11	\$565.09	\$130.41	53.14%

POWERPOINT SLIDE #2



APPRECIATE

what you **HAVE**

before it turns into what you **HAD**

Aluminum Cans Recycling Program

For those who aren't aware, we have been collecting aluminum cans for many years. We began this collection to "earn" some money to purchase extra Bibles for our Sunday School students. We have always given a Bible to each student, usually as they entered 3rd grade. In addition, we have been able to give a Beginner's Bible to each nursery student and a Study Bible to every student entering high school. Bibles have been given to others when needed. We have also used part of this money to help pay for other Christian Education projects, without taking away from purchasing Bibles or the Church budget.

Please help us out and bring your aluminum cans to the trailer at the end of the Sanctuary parking lot. There is a crate beside the trailer where you can deposit the cans. Thank you for your continued support!



Ladies Tea



Saturday, October 18, 2014

Please mark the date on your calendars.

More information to come

Game Night and Pot Luck Supper



Sunday, September 28, 2014

Mark your calendars and save the date.

More information to come.



Annual Church Picnic

Saturday, September 6, 2014

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary Parking Lot

Please join us for our Annual Church Picnic on Saturday, September 6, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary Parking Lot.

All are welcome, and remember to bring your own lawn chair!

We need help such as cooks, a game leader, and other general duties. During July and August, a work detail sign-up sheet will be in the rear of the Sanctuary, as well as a sign-up sheet for those planning to attend.

Bob Toro, Outreach Committee



This, then, is the state of the union: free and restless, growing and full of hope. So it was in the beginning. So it shall always be, while God is willing, and we are strong enough to keep the faith. -Lyndon B. Johnson

Church Office Closed

July 4, 2014



The Church Office will be closed on Friday, July 4, 2014 for the 4th of July holiday.



Our Military Servicemen, Servicewomen and Their Families

Robert Bartko, Anthony Battito, Jovan Diaz, Lauren Hansen, Jeffrey Hansen, Daniel Hedner, Edward Merz, Bryan Palmer, Lauren K. Pfeifer, Rev. Adam Tietje, Amy Updike, Michael Warren, Rob Zardona

**FREEDOM ISN'T FREE.
SOMEBODY PAID.**



Eleanor Smith and Toni Anderson

Prayer Requests

To add someone to this list, please call the Church Office at 732-634-1631



Recent Concerns

Howard Hulsizer, Dee Funk, Tom Stockl (Jake and Carolyn's son), Jeanette Stella (Aunt of Robin Kavaja), John Olenchek (friend of Elaine Ferrie)

Health and Healing

Pete Allebach, Thomas Kurzeja, Harry Musselman, Maureen Nielsen, Jennifer Perez

Those with On-Going Long-Term Concerns

Tessa Campbell (niece of Arleen Schreiber), Josephine DeVito (mother of Carol Palmer), Diana Dydak, Nancy Leclair (sister of Shirley Benkert), Esther Nielsen, Jennifer Perez

Take Care of First

By: Unknown



Legendary Florida State University football coach Bobby Bowden often inspired his team with stories. Here's one that former players cite as a favorite:

As a college baseball player, Bowden had never hit a home run. Finally, he hit one down the right-field line, into the corner. He ran past first base and looked to the coach, who waved him on.

Bowden made it home and hit the plate, thrilled to have his homer. But as he was accepting his teammates' congratulations, the opposing pitcher took the ball and threw to the first baseman. The umpire immediately called Bowden out because he'd neglected to touch the base.

Reflecting on the incident, Bowden said, "You have to take care of first base. If you don't honor the Lord first, then it doesn't matter what else you do."

Similarly, we need to take care of first things first. Unless we honor the Lord in all we do, nothing else will matter.

Christian Reflections

Food for Thought

By: Bill Aumack

Someone once wrote a letter to the local newspaper that said, "Ministers seem to feel their sermons are very important, so they spend a great deal of time preparing them. I've been attending church regularly for over 30 years, and I've probably heard about 1,500 sermons. The awful truth is that I can't remember a single one! I wonder if a minister's time might be better spent on something else."

That week, a minister read the letter to his congregation and said he'd be interested in any replies the congregation might wish to send to him.

The following week, the minister reported that he'd received many responses, most of them expressions of indignation aimed at the anonymous letter writer. He thanked the church members for the responses but said he was most thankful for one in particular, which he then read to the gathering.

"I have been married for 30 years. During that time, I have eaten well over 32,000 meals – mostly my wife's cooking – but can't remember the menu of a single meal. Of course I can recall some of my favorite dishes, but not the menus. And yet, I received the nourishment from every single one of them. I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death long ago."

Oh, how true that is. We often expect much more from church and our church family than we do anything else. Have you ever heard anyone say, "I'm not going to go to the game. There are people there who aren't really true fans?" Me neither. But I've heard people complain about the hypocrites in church. I've heard people complain about the pastor's sermon, the music, the temperature, nearly every aspect of the church experience. I remember one individual who complained about the carpet.

We live in a society of choices. Here in America, there are nearly an unlimited number of choices for everything – TV channels, music styles, cars, clothes, food and on and on it goes. This has undoubtedly affected our experience at church during worship. We compare the experience to some ideal we have in our head, or something

we've seen on TV or the internet, and sometimes the little local church can't compare. The budgets aren't as big, the number of staff isn't as high, the volunteers don't do everything perfectly. We can make lots of excuses.

But it is not really about blame, or excuses, or even taste (things we do and don't like). I think the core issue is really our own hearts. We don't really understand love. No, that's not quite right. We don't really understand *unconditional* love. The kind of love a good mother has for a child. The kind of love a true friend has for a friend. The kind of love an awesome God has for one of His children. When we don't understand that and when we don't have that kind of love in our lives, it's a whole lot easier to be critical, mean and unforgiving. When you have that unconditional love, it's much easier to be supportive and understanding.

Do you have a working understanding of unconditional love? That's worth pondering about.



Did You Know?

1. Only about 10% of the world population lives in the southern hemisphere.
2. A pineapple isn't a single fruit. It's many berries that have fused together.
3. Australia's fluctuating kangaroo population sometimes outnumbers its human population more than 2 to 1.
4. Vanilla makes up 1/3 of the world's ice cream sales.

New Jersey Timeline

- 1879 - Edison invents a practical incandescent lamp.
- 1882 - The first amusement pier over the ocean is built in Atlantic City.
- 1883 - Roselle is the first U.S. town to be lighted by electricity.
- 1887 - Thomas Edison moves his laboratories to West Orange.



June Memory Verse

Then the LORD said to him (Abraham), "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there." (Genesis 15:13)



Thought of the Month

When you're having bad dreams, turn your pillow over. The good dreams are on the other side.



How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

- Robert Louis Stevenson -

July Birthdays



If there are any omissions or errors in the July birthday list, please contact the Church Office at 732-634-1631. Thank you!

- 06 Brett Fowler, Pingkanita Wattie
- 07 Charles Kurowsky
- 09 Linda Sammartino
- 12 Esther Nielsen, Carolyn Stevenson
- 13 Regina Luntungan
- 16 Elaine Ferrie-Kaczmarek, Kelly Maye
- 17 Frank Dodich
- 18 Caitlyn Germek, Anna Hallenbeck
- 23 Greven Lewis
- 24 George Terebush
- 25 Mae Dudas, Christian Marshello
- 28 Darla Hunt
- 29 Elizabeth Hulsizer, John Turnbull



August Birthdays

If there are any omissions or errors in the August birthday list, please contact the Church Office at 732-634-1631. Thank you!

- 01 Kathleen Sturtz
- 04 Donalda Funk
- 05 Kelly Sammartino, Joan Smith
- 08 Ellen Paloti
- 10 Robert Hornyak
- 12 Joan Ross
- 13 Tyler O'Hara
- 16 Lisa Fowler
- 18 Erika Hallenbeck, Eugene Hallenbeck
- 19 Linda Herrington
- 22 Joan Collins, Cheyanne Kerchner
- 23 Barbara Ciocci, Rolly Luntungan
- 29 Kristina Sternesky

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July/August 2014

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