



STREAM LINES

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

June 2013

From the Pastor

June 2013

CROWNED TO LOVE AND SERVE

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. -Proverbs 16:31

I was privileged to attend the recent dinner to honor the chronologically most senior of this faith community. At one point, the honorees took a nostalgic but quite jovial stroll down memory lane, enthusiastically barking out answers to questions about their bygone era. Unless one had endured a certain number of seasons, answering was guesswork. The unique shared experience of those seniors had shaped them. It had imbued them with important knowledge and wisdom. They'd grown up in communities — where people knew and spent time with their neighbors, and looked out for one another. Wars through which they'd lived had required them to make sacrifices for the common good. Their families struggled to make ends meet; yet they thrived. They were inculcated with a healthy respect for truth, hard work, elders, and legitimate authority. Repeatedly, they'd witnessed God's grace and abundant provision in their lives. They lived all that together. Yet, as I chatted with seniors at various tables, I realized that each individual had a story as unique and interesting as that of the group.

Our seniors have made significant collective and individual contributions to the unfolding of God's story in this congregation and in the community and world beyond. They've used their God-given spiritual gifts and talents to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have prayed for this and Christ's larger Church. They've provided for the spiritual nurture and growth of this church through worship, Christian education, caregiving, and mission. They've served with their time, spiritual gifts, and material resources. They've served as leaders, made difficult decisions, and helped build and maintain a magnificent physical plant. They have sacrificed. Here and outside the doors of the church building, they have loved each other and *the least of these*. They have labored faithfully, some in the shadows of anonymity, others more visibly.

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The Rev. Robert C. Louer, III

Clerk of Session
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Administrative Assistant
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June 2013						
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In this season of transition, ask the story of those who've lived a few more seasons than you. Ask how they've served the church. Ask them, too, how they're serving the church right now. Let's tell our seniors, "Thank you. We love and need you! Please pray with and for us. We need you to remind us of God's grace and abundant provision in your lives and in the life of this congregation, even now, in this season of uncertainty. We need your faith and your knowledge and experience of God, Scripture, and prayer. We need your wisdom. We need your encouragement. We need your contributions of time, your talents, your financial resources. We need you to help us be good stewards of Christ's Church. We need you to teach us that the gray (or balding!) crowns of glory with which God may graciously bless us, are not merely for ourselves, but for us to bless others. Seniors, we need you to show us that there is no retirement from the Christian life, just the opportunity to bear more and sweeter fruit. How? By loving and serving God and one another in Jesus' name — just like the good old days, which these today are." Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit!

-Bob

Stream Lines Information

The deadline for the July/August 2013 issue of Stream Lines will be Wednesday, June 19, 2013 at 12:00 noon.

Remember to email your articles to:

Susan Smolsky at streamlines@comcast.net

From the Editor



The July/August issue will be available for pickup in the Sanctuary on Sunday, June 30, 2013. It will also be available for online reading and printing on or about Wednesday, June 26, 2013.

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.



Sir Valiant

Vacation Bible School 2013

**JULY 22-26
9:00 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.**

Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God!

Opportunities to Serve

VBS is in the planning stages. We're excited about our adventures in Kingdom Rock "Where Kids Stand Strong for God!"

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 22-26 available. Just call Carolyn Gilligan at 732-636-9493 and she'll sign you up!

Thank you for your continued support of our youth!

Annual Church Picnic

Sunday, June 9, 2013
12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. in Grove 3A at Merrill Park

Get ready for good Christian summer fellowship. Bring your friends and family members too. Hot dogs, hamburgers, soft drinks, family fun and games for everyone. We only ask that you contribute a side dish, snack or dessert.

Sign-up sheets are located at the back of the Sanctuary. Please list the item or items you will bring, as well as the number of people attending.



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Serving Proudly Since 1913

The Avenel Fire Company #1 is celebrating 100 years of volunteer service to the residents of Fire District #5 of Woodbridge Township, New Jersey. Come join the celebration and watch the parade on Avenel Street (starting at Rahway Avenue) at 12:00 noon, followed by a picnic in Merrill Park until 6:00 p.m.

Over the years, members of our church have volunteered their time to serve our community through the Avenel Fire Department. They are:

Former Chiefs: Charles Mezera (1933), Rubin Greco, Dorothy's husband (1953), Paul Chomiak (1963), George Shaffer (1965), Raymond Hoppick (1967), Phil Kerchner, Belinda's husband (1990), Dean Manente (1997) and Jerry Sternesky (2005)

Former Chaplains: The Rev. Dr. John L. Dunlap, HR and The Rev. C. Spencer van Gulick

Ladies Auxiliary: Belinda Kerchner and Trish Sternesky

Exempt Fireman's Association: Phil Kerchner and Joe Roder

Fireman's Relief Association: George Shaffer, Secretary

If anyone has been inadvertently left out, please email Susan at streamlines@comcast.net with your information for inclusion in the July/August issue.

WEDNESDAY EVENING STUDY AND DISCUSSION GROUP

Is your soul parched? Are you thirsty to know God? Why not come drink in God's living and active Word at "Oasis", our Wednesday evening study and discussion of the previous Sunday's scripture readings. It just might be the refreshment you need. Edible refreshments provided too!

We will continue to meet in Jacob Morgan Hall at 7:00 p.m. with Rev. Bob on Wednesday evenings thru June 26, 2013.



Church Office Closed
July 4, 2013



The Church Office will be closed on Thursday,
July 4, 2013 for the 4th of July holiday.

Father's Day
Sunday, June 16, 2013



He isn't much in the eyes of the world
He'll never make history
He isn't much in the eyes of the world
But he is the world to me
My Dad



Love. Grow. Serve.

Graduations-Honors-Awards



That time of the year is here for graduations,
honors and awards. Please email the
information that you would like published in the
July/August issue of Stream Lines to
streamlines@comcast.net.

Sermon Podcasts



The weekly sermon podcasts are once again
available through our website at
<http://avenelpresbyterianchurch.org>. On our
main menu, click the Media tab, then Podcasts.
You can also access the podcasts directly at
<http://www.podpoint.net/Avenel>.

SENIOR DINNER 2013

As the Chairperson of the Fellowship and Spiritual Life Committee, I would like to thank all those who helped make this dinner a success.

To our great volunteers, Shirley and Ed Benkert, Carolyn Gilligan, Sue Maganaro, Carol and Larry Palmer, Carolyn and Jake Stockl, and Rev. Robert C. Louer III, thank you so very much for all the help cooking, setting up, serving and cleaning up.

Thank you so much Jake for entertaining our guests.

To my Committee, Larry, Carolyn G. and Carolyn S., and Jane McKee, our Deacon Representative, thank you. Without your help in planning, cooking and serving this dinner, we would not be able to honor our seniors.

I also want to thank our seniors for the many years of their time and energy to our church. Thank you and God bless you all.

Barbara Ciocci

Thank You



Many thanks to the Fellowship Committee and all those who participated in the Senior dinner.

Thank you for honoring us with a delicious dinner and some fun. Then you gave us a meal to take home and enjoy the next day.

Love and appreciation for all you do.

Thank you again from the Seniors at First Presbyterian Church of Avenel. God bless each of you.

Attention Crafters!



I have a die-cutting Cricut Create machine for crafters, card-makers and scrapbookers, as well as several Cricut image and lettering cartridges.

Please contact Susan Smolsky at streamlines@comcast.net if you are interested in these items. They are free to any member of the congregation.

A

BIBLE

FALLING APART USUALLY BELONGS TO SOMEONE WHO ISN'T.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2013

JULY 22-26
9:00 A.M. TO 12:15 P.M.

ALL CHILDREN 3 YEARS OLD AND POTTY TRAINED
THROUGH 5TH GRADE

COME AND LEARN OF GOD'S LOVE!

MUSIC, CRAFTS, SNACKS AND MORE!

SIGN UP NOW!

July 22nd-July 26th
First Presbyterian Church of Avenel
621 E. Woodbridge Avenue
Avenel, NJ 07001
732-634-1631
Children 3 years old and potty trained through 5th grade

KINGDOM ROCK

REGISTER BY JULY 5, 2013

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Child's Name: _____ M/F _____

Address: _____

Birthday _____ Grade completed in June: _____

Parent/guardian: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Allergies: _____

I give the church permission to use my child's photograph on the church's website. Yes No



Return completed form to the First Presbyterian Church of Avenel, 621 E. Woodbridge Avenue, Avenel, NJ, 07001

Thank You Notes

Thank you to all the pet lovers for your cards, prayers and hugs on the passing of my precious little Yorkshire Terrier, Buckshot. I got him when he was barely 3 months old and he lived to 14 years. He was 2 weeks younger than Shelby Dunlap, and they were playmates when they were pups.

I also want to thank all who shared their stories of the loss of their pets. They were inspiring and healing. Thank you all so much.



Susan Smolsky



Thank you Pastor Bob, Arlene Farley (my deacon), my family and all my friends for your phone calls, cards and, most of all, your prayers.

As I struggled with the pain of shingles, just knowing I was being kept in prayer lifted my spirit.

I am finally on the downhill side of the mountain instead of the upside. Thank you Lord.

Robbie Olah



Our Military Servicemen, Servicewomen and Their Families

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

**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

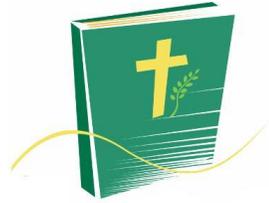
Ruth McCartney and Mildred Burns (friends of Suzanne Hatatah), Beth Berger (friend of Barbara Hanson), Linda Semler (Dani Juarez' step-daughter) Suzanne Hatatah, Gary (friend of Suzanne Hatatah) Robbie Olah, Jake Ryan Kost (Don and Carolyn Gilligan's grandson)

Health and Healing

Dot and Pete Allebach, Scott Severyn, Maureen Nielsen, Harry Musselman, Eugene Breza, Thomas Kurzeja

Those with On-Going Long-Term Concerns

Ann Marie Carola (friend of John and Linda Guarracino), Nancy Leclair (sister of Shirley Benkert), Jennifer Perez, Diana Dydak, Esther Nielsen, Josephine DeVito (mother of Carol Palmer), Tessa Campbell (niece of Arleen Schreiber)



June Memory Verse

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.

Proverbs 16:31 (NRSV)



Thought of the Month

Do not regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many.



June Birthdays

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



- 01 Reagan Connolly
- 02 Randall Hunt
- 06 David Englert
- 07 John Wattie
- 08 Cindy Battito, John Hogan
- 10 Kimberly Durham
- 11 Pete Allebach
- 12 Nathaniel Manente
- 15 John Lewis, Vincent J. Meehan, Kacie Turnbull
- 17 Julie Cohen
- 18 Nkenna Usuwa
- 19 Bill Walsh
- 20 Chineme Usuwa
- 21 Carolyn Cullum, June Sheehan
- 22 Eleanor Smith
- 23 Heather Endrihs
- 27 Millie Knotts
- 28 Ryan Miller
- 30 James Sheehan, Nnamdi Usuwa



Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps a songbird will come.

- Chinese Proverb -

Christian Reflections

What Really Matters

A vacationing American businessman standing on the pier of a quaint coastal fishing village in southern Mexico watched as a small boat with just one young Mexican fisherman pulled into the dock. Inside the small boat were several large yellow-fin tuna. Enjoying the warmth of the early afternoon sun, the American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish.

"How long did it take you to catch them?" the American casually asked. "Oh, a few hours," the Mexican fisherman replied. "Why don't you stay out longer and catch more fish?" the American businessman then asked. "With this I have more than enough to support my family's needs."

The businessman then became serious. "But what do you do with the rest of your time?" Responding with a smile, the Mexican fisherman answered, "I sleep late, play with my children, watch ballgames, and take siesta with my wife. Sometimes in the evenings I take a stroll into the village to see my friends, play the guitar, sing a few songs..."

The American businessman impatiently interrupted. "Look, I have an MBA from Harvard, and I can help you to be more profitable. You can start by fishing several hours longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra money, you can buy a bigger boat. With the additional income that larger boat will bring, before long you can buy a second boat, then a third one, and so on, until you have an entire fleet of fishing boats."

Proud of his own sharp thinking, he excitedly elaborated a grand scheme which could bring even bigger profits. "Then, instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you'll be able to sell your fish directly to the processor, or even open your own cannery. Eventually, you could control the product, processing and distribution. You could leave this tiny coastal village and move to Mexico City, or possibly even Los Angeles or New York City, where you could even further expand your enterprise."

Having never thought of such things, the Mexican fisherman asked, "But how long will all this take?" After a rapid mental calculation, the Harvard MBA pronounced, "Probably about 15-20 years, maybe less if you work really hard."

"And then what, senor?" asked the fisherman. "Why, that's the best part!" answered the businessman with a laugh. "When the time is right, you would sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions."

"Millions? Really? What would I do with it all?" asked the young fisherman in disbelief.

The businessman boasted, "Then you could happily retire with all the money you've made. You could move to a quaint coastal fishing village where you could sleep late, play with your grandchildren, watch ballgames, and take siesta with your wife. You could stroll to the village in the evenings where you could play the guitar and sing with your friends all you want."



Did You Know?

1. The most commonly used letter in the alphabet is "E"
2. The least used letter in the alphabet is "Q"
3. Tennessee is bordered by 8 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia

Peach Brandy

A Baptist preacher went to see a member of the community and invited him to come to church on Sunday morning. The man was a producer of fine peach brandy and told the preacher he would love to attend his church if the Pastor would drink some of his brandy and admit doing so in front of the congregation. The preacher agreed and drank up.

Sunday morning came and the man came to church. The preacher recognized him from the pulpit and said, "I see Mr. Johnson is here with us this morning. I want to thank him publicly for his hospitality this week and especially for the peaches he gave me and the spirit in which they were given."



PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

PNC Update (As of April 23) – The PNC held several phone interviews with pastor candidates and is scheduling some additional phone interviews in the coming weeks.

The Committee, comprised of Ed Benkert, Delia Culton, Wayne Dubin, Elaine Ferrie, Carolyn Gilligan, Christian Marshello, Bruce McKee, Kevin Miller, Melissa Miller and Carolyn Stevenson, is very optimistic of the selection process so far.

Please feel free to give any comments or feedback you have to any of these individuals. We welcome your comments.



In Our Denomination

Men of the Church Sunday
June 16, 2013



Throughout the liturgical year, the General Assembly has chosen special Sunday observances. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has designated certain Sundays to recognize the Gifts of Women, Older Adults, Families, Young People and Men of the Church. Men of the Church Sunday is one of these special observances. It is a day for recognizing the gifts and contributions to ministry that men have made in every congregation, and to give thanks for the witness that they make in the home, the workplace, community and church.

On June 16, 2013, congregations are invited to celebrate Men of the Church Sunday. This can be a day of thanksgiving and new beginnings, as all congregations recognize, rejoice and renew their commitment to providing vital ministries with men, that men might perform their unique ministries in the home, church and community.

The theme for 2013 is: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Galatians 2:19 (NRSV)

The theme applies to all of us who are committed to Jesus Christ and seek to follow him as Savior and Lord. The theme offers the opportunity to illustrate with concrete examples the many ways that Christ lives in us, develops in us our gifts for ministry, and frees us to bear all the fruits of the Spirit. Those who are fathers, grandfathers and uncles are involved in teaching their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Those who are husbands seek to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord in their relationship with their spouses. Those who are Sunday School teachers are involved in modeling Christ living in them. Those who are scout leaders model Christian values as they work with scouts. Those who interact in the workplace and in the community demonstrate to their colleagues by the quality of their lives and relationships what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Those who volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and/or participate in Presbyterian Disaster Relief activities model behaviors that provide others an opportunity to see what it means to live out the spirit of Christ working in and through them. The theme allows us to lift up and celebrate ways Christ lives in the men of the church. The theme also invites us to identify areas where men can be challenged to be more effective – to seriously consider ways they can intentionally die to self and live for Christ.

Disability Inclusion Sunday

Sunday, June 23, 2013

By: The Rev. Sue Montgomery, Team Leader of the PC(USA) Disability Consultants
Pastor of the Nickleville Presbyterian Church in Emlenton, PA

The Inclusive Body of Christ – 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

As a college student working at a mission site in Appalachia, I learned a song about a man who lived on the moon. His body was made of favorite foods. It was humorous to hear what children said -- legs made of spaghetti, heads of cheese, arms of breadsticks, feet of pizza, stomachs of Jello. One of the most memorable of responses was from a child, the future class clown, who wanted to be the funny bone! The scripture passage from Corinthians uses the imagery of the body to affirm the importance of every part of the body -- especially the less honorable or respectable. From the brain to the funny bone, every part of the body is necessary. The truth of the matter is the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor can the head say to the feet, "I have no need of you." We want to believe the church never says to anyone, "we have no need of you," and certainly members of the church do want to be affirming and inclusive of others. Sometimes the message "I have no need of you" is spoken in unintentional and hurtful ways.

During the meeting of the 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), hearings were held on an overture that addressed disability awareness. Many Presbyterians believe the church is already inclusive, sensitive, and aware of the ministry needs of people who live with disabilities. Some were saying that the overture calling for disability awareness training wasn't necessary. That is, until a mother shared the story of her daughter who lives with a disability with her Sunday School class. The class was studying the Corinthians passage on the body and all its parts. The teacher asked each student what part of the body they would be. Every child but one claimed a part of the body. The mother then shared what happened when the teacher encouraged her daughter to choose what part of the body that she would be. The daughter's response was this: "I'd be the appendix because people could live without me." The room was silent. No one had ever intentionally told this child "I have no need of you," yet the attitudes and silent messages she perceived had been heard loud and clear -- the world, the Body of Christ, could live without her.

There are human and spiritual attributes happening here. The human is our desire to create hierarchies of importance and value. We practice this skill all the time. We do it when we discern priority orders for our use of time, resources, and skills. We do it in our relationships with one another, our social and

cultural structures. Hierarchy of personal value is tangible in medical care, employment, education, housing, and in the community of faith which we know as the church. No one wanted this mother's child to feel like she was the appendix and people could live without her, yet that silent, unspoken message was heard and felt loud and clear. As members of the Body of Christ, each and every one of us needs to hear the voice of this perceptive child, and make sure no child ever again feels unnecessary or unwanted.

People who live with disabilities have come a long way since the days when parents were told to institutionalize their "handicapped" children and forget they were born. As a society, the days of complete rejection and isolation of people with disabilities has ended, yet difficulties regarding the full inclusion of people with disabilities continues. Sadly families are told: "We don't have a program for your child here, you'll need to find another church." Or, "If you can't get into our building because of our stairs, you'll need to find a church for your kind." These kinds of statements reflect the hierarchy, the qualifications, and the requirements expected of those who enter into the church buildings and programs. However, when we seek to be the body of Christ, hierarchies are transformed into something new and different. Paul turns traditional understandings of value and hierarchical importance upside down and creates havoc on those who revel in power. The weak become strong, the first become last, the last first, the least the most important, the less honorable the honored.

And here is where we see the second theme of this passage. Not only does Paul transform hierarchies used to define worth and value, Paul gives us a new way of understanding God's creative breath and gifts of the Spirit. As the people, the creation of God, we are created in the image of God. Since all of us are created in the image of God, those who are the weaker, who live with disabilities or other differences, are also created in the image of God. In the diversity and depth of God's creative breath, there is no exclusionary clause for anyone and there is a place at God's diverse table for everyone. Disability is frequently understood as something that needs to be fixed, cured, rehabilitated or repaired. Such understandings feed attitudes of exclusion and failure to comply. If only people with disabilities would believe more, work harder, get the proper medical and psychological care, acceptance will come. Such attitudes can only be transformed with a new understanding. When disability is understood as a part of God's creative diversity, disability is no longer an aberration that needs to be fixed. Sure there are some aspects of disability that benefit from adaptive equipment and medical advances. Yet disability often brings wisdom, sensitivity, and new understandings to relationships and life that would otherwise be absent. When disability is seen as a part of the diversity of God's creative hand, then disability is free to be embraced and affirmed rather than judged. The power of God's transforming love comes to life when a child with a disability is no longer known as the "problem child" and becomes known as a child of God.

Never forget when God finished creating the earth and humankind, God stepped back and declared all of creation good. The powerful hierarchical and judgmental acts that give people more or less value are transformed when we remember we are all created in the image of God. Since God created us with a variety of gifts, our gifts should not be the basis for comparison, judgment, inclusion or exclusion from the Body of Christ. Comparisons are a form of judgment that is painful and exclusionary. These attitudes prevent everyone from seeing the gifts in one another. God creates a variety of gifts in us, and it's time for us to not only see that rich and deep variety, but to claim and appreciate it.

Central to our well-being is our need to belong, to have a place where we are accepted, embraced, and valued for who we are. Within the Body of Christ, there are no exclusionary clauses for disability or any form of judgment that says you aren't needed or wanted here. The gift of belonging to the Body of Christ is not ours to give. It is Christ's and Christ's alone. Belonging is made complete when gifts are shared, accepted, and cherished. Belonging is a shared experience at the table and in the community of faith where we, as the family of God, live and work as the Body of Christ. Within that body, God enables us to value and cherish one another just as we are. May we do so to the glory of God. May we seek to enable every child, teen, or adult, disabled or not, to experience and know how vital each is to the Body of Christ, for together, we are the heart of faith. To God be the Glory.

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June 2013

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621 E. Woodbridge Avenue
Avenel, NJ 07001
(732) 634-1631

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Non-Profit
Organization



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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AVENEL

June 2013