



# STREAM LINES

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

October 2014

## From the Pastor

**October 2014**

### Why Me, Lord?

*"...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." -2 Corinthians 12:9*

You've heard the question, and you know the circumstances in which it's usually asked. Maybe you've asked it yourself, to yourself or another, silently or aloud. The question, "Why me, Lord?" is often heard on receiving bad news, as a reflex. It may also surface gradually during days, seasons or years of intense pain, loss or suffering. The question "Why me, Lord?" is frequently freighted with angst or despair. It's a searching question, a cry for answers to the only One who has answers. It is thus, a prayer.

During my recent hospitalization for a gastrointestinal bleed (the medical record for which amassed 1,100 pages), I found myself repeatedly asking the question, "Why me, Lord?" The question though, had somehow taken on a certain peculiarity. Although my prayer was worded "Why me, Lord?," the "Why" of it had flipped positively upside down. "Why Lord, should I be cared for by such highly educated, skilled, experienced, caring and humble doctors and nurses? Why should I be the one for whom they so strenuously labor, pooling their expertise and wisdom in a team effort to locate the origin of my bleeding, and stop it. Why *me*? Why should they go home wrestling with *my* case, conducting Internet searches on their own to discern possible causes and treatments? Why should I be assigned a nurse who teaches other nurses, who prayed for *me* before her shift, asking God to enable her to sense what it's like to be the one laying in the hospital bed — so she could provide the best and most compassionate care possible? Why *me*, Lord?" Why should nurses and aides come cheer *me* up during their break times? Why should those Portuguese ladies so willingly and joyfully clean my room, and radiate God's love to *me* with their sunny smiles? Why Lord, should I have a male nurse's aide, who was strong and kind and gentle? His name was Immanuel,

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The Rev. Robert C. Louer, III

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*God is with us*, in Hebrew. Lord, why *me*? How is it that *I* should live in an age when cutting-edge technology that's never existed is available to aid *my* healing?

"Why Lord, in this dire situation, should you so *bless* me to be the beneficiary of the selfless love and companionship of my beautiful wife Carrie?" How much more difficult it would have been for me to endure twelve trying days in the hospital, eight in the intensive care unit, without Carrie. Why *me*, Lord, that you would shower *me* with the love, concern and prayers of family members who travelled from North Jersey, suburban Philadelphia, and southern Ohio — to visit and bless *me* with the gift of their presence? Why Lord, why *me*? Why Lord, would the community I lead and serve as pastor, people I've known for less than two years, gather after worship and at the hospital to pray for *my* healing and sustenance, and uphold Carrie and *me* in their personal prayers? Why would they send cards to encourage and comfort *me*, including ones made by children participating in the church's Vacation Bible School? Why would these kind people go out of their way to offer to cook and deliver meals for Carrie and *me*, and to record and deliver worship DVDs to help sustain our bodies and spirits?

Through this experience, I am coming to understand more fully how God sometimes uses suffering to draw us closer to God and each other. This event gave me a firmer grasp of God's response to Paul when he prayed three times for God to remove the thorn that had been tormenting his flesh: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." God didn't answer Paul as he wished, but with what helped shape Paul into the person God intended him to be, and what strengthened Paul's faith in God. Because of my recent affliction, I believe one answer to my question "Why *me* God?," is this: "Because I love you Bob, my grace is sufficient for you; my power is made perfect in weakness." In my weakness, God showered me with grace and gave me eyes to see God's unmerited love and favor at work in my life. God did this through untold numbers of human beings, including so many of you. For the comfort I received during this time and for the people through whom it came, I thank God and them. I pray that in your time of trouble, you too may receive God's grace and be given eyes to see it, and the abundance of God's power in your life. When you are strong, may you also be that power and grace to and for others in their time of trouble.

In Christ,

Bob Louer, Pastor

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## STREAM LINES INFORMATION

**The deadline for the November 2014 issue of Stream Lines will be Wednesday, October 22, 2014 at 12:00 noon.**

Remember to email your articles to Susan at:

**[streamlines@comcast.net](mailto:streamlines@comcast.net)**

**From the  
Editor**



The November issue will be available for pickup in the Sanctuary on Sunday, November 2, 2014. It will also be available for online reading and printing on or about Wednesday, October 29, 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.

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## Clerk's Corner

### Notes from Session

## SESSION ROUND-UP

- If you see a new face in the church office, it's our Administrative Assistant, Tina Pinto! Tina comes to us from the White Church where she is also a Deacon and Sunday School teacher. Welcome, Tina!
  - On Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, we will host members of the Navajo Ministries who will share a message during worship. They will also have Native American jewelry and books for sale after worship.
  - The Memorial Committee will hold Remembrance Sunday on January 11, 2015.
  - The planned Women's Retreat on September 13<sup>th</sup> will be changed to a Women's Prayer Breakfast. Stay tuned for details!
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### PASTOR APPRECIATION SUNDAY

**Sunday, October 12, 2014**

Rev. Bob,  
You have a servant's heart.  
You make a difference.  
Thank you for all you do in His name.

You show that you are a letter from  
Christ...written not with ink but with the Spirit of  
the living God, not on tablets of stone but on  
tablets of human hearts. II Corinthians 3:3  
(NIV)



### ANNUAL LADIES TEA

#### REMINDER

**Saturday, October 18, 2014**  
2:00 to 4:30 p.m. – Jacob Morgan Hall  
13 Years and Over  
\$15.00 Donation – No Tickets at Door  
**RSVP October 1, 2014**

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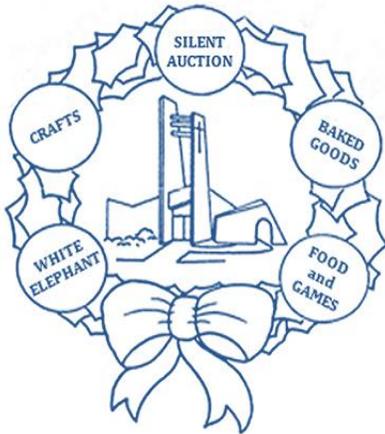
## *Thank You Notes*



We wish to thank our church family for all of your prayers, cards and warm thoughts that were offered on behalf of Ruth (Lillian's sister) and Nancy (Lillian's daughter). As we experience sadness since their recent passing, your constant love and support for our family was overwhelming. Thanks, too, for all those who attended and helped with Nancy's memorial service at our church. Your kindness will be remembered always.

With love,  
Lillian, Shirley and Family

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## 46th Annual Holiday Fair

**Saturday, November 15, 2014**  
**9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

First Presbyterian Church of Avenel  
621 E. Woodbridge Avenue  
Avenel, NJ 07001

In the Gym

White Elephant, Jewelry, Crafts, Baked Goods, Silent Auction, CDs, DVDs

Full Lunch Menu featuring homemade soups and sandwiches

### **LIVE MUSIC!**

Now is the time to start looking through your basement, attic, garage and closets for any unwanted items that can be donated to our Fair. All items can be left on the stage in Jacob Morgan Hall starting Sunday, October 12 through Thursday, November 13. If there are items that you want to donate but are unable to store until then, please call Cindy Culton.

**We NEED your donations!**

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### **SOMETHING NEW HAS COME TO THE CHURCH WEBSITE!**

Check out our new "responsive" design to the church website. A responsive design is all about adjusting designs to accommodate screens of different sizes. Most pages will now be easily readable on tablets and smart phones without the need to pinch and stretch and horizontally scroll just to read one section at a time.



Please update your browsers to the newest versions possible. Internet Explorer is the most problematic with responsive designs, especially the older versions. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best.

Please note that all .pdf files remain the same. Our .pdf files are the issues of Stream Lines, registration forms, flyers, etc. They cannot be made responsive. They are best viewed on desktops, tablets or in landscape mode on smart phones.

Any questions, contact Susan at [churchwebsite@comcast.net](mailto:churchwebsite@comcast.net).

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**Our Military Servicemen, Servicewomen and Their Families**

Anthony Battito, Jovan Diaz, Lauren Hansen, Jeffrey Hansen, Daniel Hedner, Edward Merz, 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**

Jane McKee, Gay Patrouch, Carol Palmer, Josephine DeVito (mother of Carol Palmer), Rev. Bob

**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, Esther Nielsen, Maureen Nielsen, Bryan Palmer, Jennifer Perez

**In Sympathy**

Our heartfelt sympathies to Lillian Thorsen, Shirley Benkert, family and friends on the passing of Lillian's daughter and Shirley's sister, Nancy Leclair.

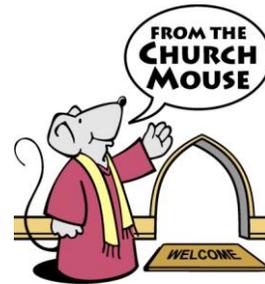
**GAME NIGHT/POT LUCK SUPPER  
RE M I N D E R**



**Sunday, September 28, 2014**

Pot Luck Supper begins at 5:00 p.m. in the Gym, followed by Game Night also in the Gym. Please bring a covered dish to share.

**All Are Welcome!**



**HICKORY DICKORY DOCK  
DON'T FORGET TO TURN BACK  
YOUR CLOCK!**

Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 2, 2014. Don't forget to turn your clocks back 1 hour.

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# *Christian Reflections*

## **Acts of Kindness**

-Author Unknown-

This young man was driving home one evening on a two lane country road. Work in this small mid-western community was almost as slow as his beat-up Pontiac, but he never quit looking. Ever since the factory closed, he'd been unemployed, and with winter coming on, the chill had finally hit home.

It was a lonely road. Not very many people had a reason to be on it, unless they were leaving. Most of his friends had already left. They had families to feed and dreams to fulfill, but he stayed on. After all, this was where he buried his mother and father. He was born here and he knew the country. He could go down this road blind, and tell you what was on either side, and with his headlights not working, this came in handy.

It was starting to get dark and light snow flurries were coming down. He'd better get a move on. You know, he almost didn't see the old lady stranded on the side of the road. But even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her.

Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help, for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe. He looked poor and hungry. He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was that chill which only fear can put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you Ma'am. Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady, that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt. As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down the window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only just passing through.

She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid. Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk. She asked him how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She had already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped.

Bryan never thought twice about the money. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way. He told her if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance that they needed, and Bryan added, "...and think of me." He waited until she started her car and drove off.

It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road, the lady saw a small café. She went in to grab a bite to eat and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The cash register was like the telephone of an out of work actor – it didn't ring much.

Her waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the whole day couldn't erase.

The lady noticed that the waitress was nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain and aches change her attitude. The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger.

Then she remembered Bryan. . .

After the lady finished her meal and the waitress went to get change for a hundred dollar bill, the lady slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. She wondered where the lady could be, then she noticed something written on the napkin under which were 4 one-hundred dollar bills. There were tears

in her eyes when she read what the lady wrote. It said: "You don't owe me anything. I have been there too. Somebody once helped me out the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here is what you do: Do not let this chain of love end with you."

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard.

She knew how worried her husband was, and as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, "Everything's gonna be alright. I love you, Bryan."

Practice Random Acts of Kindness!!! We are never prepared for what we receive.



### **Mealtime as a Family**

Amid busy and varied schedules, many families find a way to sit down together for dinner regularly. Family-health advocates describe the benefits: an increased sense of unity, children sharing news and feeling listened to, and the physical perks of a planned, seated meal.

In scripture, many great encounters between people and God happen around meals. Abraham and Sarah prepare a meal for three guests who turn out to be angels (Genesis 18). God instructs the Hebrew slaves to eat a special meal together before their delivery from Egypt (Exodus 12).

Every year since, Jews have celebrated the Passover feast. Elijah is strengthened with food served by an angel (1 Kings 19). Jesus shares meals not only with religious leaders, but with "sinners" (e.g., Matthew 9). Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples before his death has become one of the church's sacraments and a "foretaste" of the heavenly banquet to come.

When Christian families eat together, it's a holy time in God's presence, just as when the church shares Holy Communion - a true fellowship dinner!



### **Did You Know?**

1. The diameter of the moon is less than the distance from Los Angeles to New York.
2. The sun comprises about 99% of the total mass in our solar system.
3. The Eiffel Tower gets approximately 6 inches taller in the heat of the summer.
4. The average depth of the ocean is 2.7 miles.

### **New Jersey Timeline**

- 1943 - The U.S.S. New Jersey battleship is put into active service.
- 1947 - Larry Doby, from Paterson, becomes the second African American to play Major League Baseball.
- 1947 - New Jersey adopts its third state constitution.
- 1951 - The New Jersey Turnpike opens.



## October Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 12:9

"...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."



## Thought of the Month

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

- Eleanor Roosevelt



## October Birthdays



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

- 03 Courtney Kost
- 04 Breanna Welch
- 05 Heather Kooy, Ann Usuwa, Dawn Walsh
- 06 Caitlyn Altieri  
Ilene Nisbet
- 07 Andrew Marshello
- 08 Nick Sammartino  
Ariana Sterlacci
- 10 Suzanne Hogan  
Susan Smolsky  
Lillian Thorsen
- 11 Gail Sheets, Matthew Sternesky
- 13 Maureen Nielsen
- 16 Bruce McKee
- 17 Michael Howell
- 19 Jane McKee
- 23 Shirley Benkert
- 26 Lois Toro



The maple tree in front of the doorstep burned like a gigantic red torch. The oaks along the roadway glowed yellow and bronze. The fields stretched like a carpet of jewels -- emerald and topaz and garnet. Everywhere she walked, the color shouted and sang around her. In October, any wonderful unexpected thing might be possible. - Elizabeth George Speare

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October 2014

Fold Here

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First Presbyterian Church of Avenel  
621 E. Woodbridge Avenue  
Avenel, NJ 07001  
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Organization



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