

ST. MATTHEW'S UCC WHITE DOVE FLYER

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"



JULY 2024

Secretary Office **Hours are:**

Mon., Wed., Thurs. 10am—2pm

Phone: 610-381-2442

Email: stmatts@ptd.net

Website: stmattsucckunkletown.com

Sunday Services

9am Worship

CIA Class

start at 10:30am following
worship services.

Diann Bittenbender

Council President

Starlene Barr

Treasurer

Staci Gower

Christian Education

Renée Keiper

Office Manager

Dan Smale

Music Director

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Kunkletown, Pa 18058

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LETTER FROM LINDA

Dear Friends in Christ,

Do you remember the poem "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer? ***"I think that I shall never see, A poem lovely as a tree."***

I'm a fool for trees. I love trees! I have very fond memories of trees. My very first swing was tied to a large branch of an apple tree in my grandparents' back yard. I could swing for hours, trying to reach to the sky with my feet or twisting and twisting and then made dizzy when I let it go.

Years ago, Dad planted an apple tree in his back yard. While it grew into a wonderful shade tree, it never produced an apple, until recent years. He hung a swing for his grandchildren from its largest branch, just like his father did for his grandchildren. Maybe it didn't produce fruit but it did produce continuity in tradition and a love of children's joy in simple pleasures.

My childhood friend, Terry Buskirk and I, spent many an hour sitting in the vees of branches in a large tree in his backyard, reading comic books. My best friend, Connie Kleintop and I, went for bike rides and then sat under shady trees to eat our packed lunches. I've spent countless hours reading books, which I consider as friends, under shady trees. Like good friends, trees offer a safe haven and a sense of comradery.

Our neighbors, Grant and Lottie Smith, had two daughters, Margaret and Lois. Both gals moved to California. On one of their visits home, they told me all about the majestic sequoia redwood trees, some growing over 345 feet tall! They showed us pictures of one tree that they drove through! As a kid, it was hard to comprehend such a tree. It became one of the things on my bucket list...to see a giant redwood tree and to go to Disneyland!

I didn't get to Disneyland. I settled for Disney World, but in 1995 I not only got to see those incredible living giants but was able to share the experience with my husband and daughter. It was everything I hoped for and more. Overcome with emotion, I became a tree-hugger that day as I wrapped my arms around one as far as they would go but at over 101 feet in circumference, it was a whisper of an embrace. When you see something like a giant redwood, the only words that came to my mind was the lyric from a song, "My God, how great thou art!"

"A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed Against the earth's sweet flowing breast."

I remember my dad planting chestnut trees and he recited a whole poem he learned in school, but it's the first two lines I've never forgotten from "The Village Blacksmith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow...

"Under a spreading chestnut-tree, The village smithy stands." Those chestnut trees, now years later, are huge and produces a bounty of chestnuts that provides my mom with a nice little income in the fall. How many other people and farmers are able to make a living from the produce of trees?

When we bought our home in 1978, my dad gifted us with two small pine tree seedlings. Today they tower over 50 feet tall. I love to think they are like my dad's guardians over us. They give me comfort and joy to look at them. A couple of years ago, we noticed a very tiny growth in our border around our house. It looked like a little tiny pine seedling. Harry wanted to pull it like a weed but I convinced him to let it go. I believe it was a seedling from one of Dad's trees he gave us over 46 years ago. I love that something from one of his trees will live on. I plan to plant it somewhere Dad loved and pray it will grow tall and strong and continue to produce more seedlings.

LETTERS FROM LINDA CONTINUED:

When my dad died, a dear friend gifted us with a young sapling we planted in our yard. It's been bitter-sweet to see it grow but I love to look at it and think of my dad. Its branches outstretch to the heavens and I think ***"A tree that looks at God all day, And lifts her leafy arms to pray."***

I am so grateful I live where I do, surrounded by gentle mountains and rolling hills, and blessed with four seasons. In the spring, my heart grows lighter with longer days and thrill at the sight of trees beginning to bud. When cherry, dogwoods and magnolias begin to bloom, my heart sings with delight. In summer, my inner artist is awed with all the different verdant leafy greens that grace the countryside. ***"A tree that may in Summer wear, A nest of robins in her hair."***

My soul has mixed feelings and slowly saddens as summer draws to an end as I watch those same lovely green leaves begin to start looking old and tired, for I know autumn is just around the corner. For a few short weeks, those same trees become some of God's greatest artwork when they blaze reds, yellows, oranges and rusts. Even in winter, when those same trees are now pillars of stark, naked grays and browns, there is a raw beauty in their form against a cloudy grey sky. After the first snowfall and those same empty branches become laden with crisp white snow, they become like beautiful women dressed for a formal dance with arm length white gloves and when the sun hits them, you can see diamonds in their crowns. ***"Soon whose bosom snow has lain; Who intimately lives with rain."***

About a week ago, a very big branch broke off Dad's old apple tree. I can't explain it, but I was very sad about it. I hate to see trees chopped down, lose large branches or die. Seeing that tree lose a part of it, makes me think that no matter how much I don't ever want a tree to die, or those I love, nothing is forever in the natural world. But there is also comfort when men and women die and believes in Jesus Christ, he and she will find everlasting life in heaven. A tree, as long as it bears seedlings, will live forever, in God's world.

Joyce Kilmer ends his poem with ***"Poems are made by fools like me, But only God can make a tree."***

I'm so glad God made fools and trees.

Faithfully yours,

Linda



THE GREATEST MIRACLE | APOLOGETIC CORNER

BY: DANIEL SMALE

What does the Bible record as the greatest miracle of all time? While there are many miracles throughout the Bible, including the miracle of the Resurrection, the first miracle, found in the first verse of the Bible makes every other miracle possible. Genesis 1:1 (ESV) proclaims, *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Over the last few months, I have attempted to lay out the various arguments for the existence of truth and the existence of God. It was through the cosmological argument for the existence of God that Christians and atheists alike recognize that modern scientific evidence concludes the universe came into being out of *literally nothing*. (One of my professors once explained *nothing* as the stuff that rocks dream about.)

The arguments I shared over the last few months are not intended to bring others to a knowledge and understanding of Christ. Instead, they are intended to remove stumbling blocks that may have kept people from hearing the Good News of the Gospel. If someone does not believe that truth exists or believes that truth is only relative to the individual then you are going to have a difficult time getting them to admit there is a God who is the way, the truth, and the life. Along the same lines, if someone does not believe that God exists, then again, it will be a challenge to find arguments to convince the person that miracles are possible. These arguments build on one another and serve as a tool that you can use, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to put a stone in someone's shoe and possibly bring them into closer into a relationship and realization of Christ's saving grace.

It is powerful to realize, that if God exists, then miracles are possible. If God is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator of the universe then arguably it would be easy for Him to intervene at His divine pleasure to suspend the laws of nature with signs and wonders. If God created the natural laws then it would follow that He could certainly overpower them. Natural laws define what normally happens when no one intervenes, but if God created the universe, if God wrote and defined the natural laws, then He would be able to suspend and overpower them at His will. John Stott explains, "It would be ridiculous to suppose that the creation now controls the Creator. He is able to step aside from his uniformity, and the Bible says that he has sometimes done so." (*Christ the Controversialist*, p. 56)

How would the skeptic answer the question, "Do Miracles Happen Today?" They would most certainly deny any miracle is possible. But how do they know this? There is no scientific explanation for how the universe began out of nothing, there is no explanation for how life suddenly appeared in the Cambrian era without any precursors in the Pre-Cambrian strata (even Darwin recognized this problem), and the fine-tuning of the universe brings the possibility of life existing by chance so close to statistical zero that we approach a point where it takes more faith to be an atheist. Over and over the facts point to a Creator outside of the universe.

What is the purpose of the signs and wonders in the pages of Scripture? Apologist Dr. Frank Turek explains, that "The central purpose of miracles in the Bible is to confirm that someone who says that they have new revelation is really getting it from God. The miracle confirms the message. The sign confirms the sermon."¹

The real issue with miracles is not a matter of reason. The real issue is desire or love. I can't prove to you the miracles in the Bible happened. It is an issue that requires growing in the knowledge and understanding of God and the person of Christ. Tim Chester explains, "that even if someone performed a miracle in front of your eyes, that would not be enough. There were plenty of people who saw the miracles of Jesus—and then plotted to kill him...If you're determined to reject God, then you'll always find reasons to reject his miracles... [B]elieving in miracles is rational if God exists. You may still reject God, but you'll be doing so for other reasons—reasons that have more to do with what you love than what you think." (*Do Miracles Happen Today*, p. 20)

Soli Deo gloria.
Dan Smale

¹ from *The Four-Point Case for Christianity* pamphlet

Staci's Stuff

By Staci Gower, Coordinator of Christian Formation

It's July! Vacation Bible School is almost here. Our grove will be full of campers of all ages learning about God's word and doing amazing things all week.

Ring, ring... into our grove July 15-19. We are seeking students ages 3 to 11, youth helpers ages 12 to 17 and adult leaders to join our team. VBS will be held 9 to noon daily, and includes Bible storytelling, crafts, science experiments, snacks, games, music, fellowship, and making new friends. Registration forms are available and due by July 4.



For our Wednesday afternoon field trip, we will visit Lehigh Gap Nature Center in Slatington. Students are encouraged to bring a packed lunch. We will have VBS in the morning at the grove and then go down to the church to eat our bagged lunches and board the bus at 12:40. Families may ride the bus or meet us there. We will return to the church at 4 p.m.

After our last morning of VBS activities, we will host our Friday Finale on Friday, July 19 at noon. VBS participants, families, and congregation members are invited to attend. We will have hot dogs, dessert, and drinks. There may also "bee" a surprise or two in the works for our finale!

We will commission our VBS Team during the children's message on July 14, and after worship we will bring our supplies to the grove and start setting up for VBS. If you are donating any perishable snack donations such as yogurt, string cheese, or fruit, please bring it this day and I will put it in the refrigerator.

July 21 will be VBS Sunday, where we invite the VBS participants to come help us with worship. We will have a skit with Dora and Lou the Lightning Bug, act out a Bible story, do a science experiment, and recap the fun we had.

Children's Church will be held in the grove while we're worshipping there. We will focus on Bible stories from the Old Testament.

There is no Faith & Family Fun Night this month due to VBS and family vacations. The next one will be in August, which is our annual mini golf family night at Snydersville Golf Range. I will buy popsicles for the children and youth who attend.

For more information or to sign up for upcoming events, email: stacigeorge0317@gmail.com or call/text 610-283-4696.

Shirley Kuntz—Getz Personal Care Home, 1026 Scenic Dr, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Edith George, Gladys Smith—Scenic View Personal Care,

1305 Church Rd, Palmerton PA 18071

James Borger—Moravian Village Health Ctr, Rm 142, 634 E. Broad St, Bethlehem PA 18018

Larry Hahn—Gracedale, 2 Gracedale Ave, Nazareth PA 18064

Joyce Smale, Gladys Meixsell—Pleasant Valley Manor, 4227 Manor Dr,

Stroudsburg PA 18360

Leah Jane Sterner—300 Covered Bridge Rd, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Kyle Frable—104 5K Lane, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Velma Silfies—Mrs. Bush's Personal Care, 302 Kunkletown Rd, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Jesse Ziegenfus—Brookmont Healthcare Ctr, 510 Brookmont Dr, Effort PA 18330

Joann Hunsicker—Mrs. Bush's Personal Care—2W, P.O. Box 327, Kunkletown, PA 18058

MEMBERS NEEDED FOR THE VISITATION COMMITTEE

TO VISIT HOMEBOUND FOLKS

NOTIFY WANDA WUNDER IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

Prayer Concerns

Frank Rapa, Leon Barlieb, Ellen Kresge, Beverly Frantz, John Blundetto, Jessica Speer, Tom and Lee Byrne, Barbara Souders, Debra Kemmerer, Joan Madden, Janet Smith, Marilyn McCloud, Kyle Frable, Diane Bonser, Shirley Smith, Edith George, Doris Neumeyer, Janet Gower, Joyce Gower, Conner Brawley, Gabrielle Collins, Gene Borger, Sharlee Ahner, Ronald Frantz, Sheila Sherer, Margaret and Larry Hahn, Hudson Stewart, Conner Bittenbender, Marlene Long, Roberta Heffley, Mike Heller, and Brian Holderman (Wendy Peddigree's brother), Barry Serfass (Brenda Hawk's brother), George Christiansen (Stephen's brother), Barbara Marks (Pat Martin's sister-in-law), Georgia Smith (friend of Connie Frantz and Dora Tartar), David Zacharias (Dean's brother), Helen Alpaugh, Leni (friend of Helen), Logan Mackes (Rose Fritz's grandson), Glenn Smith family for the loss of his daughter, Kim.



CIA Cook's Corner



One Pot Chicken, Bacon and Ranch Pasta

Submitted by Dora Tartar

Who doesn't like easy one pot meals? Delicious & less dishes to wash & I'm all for that! Enjoy!

Prep time= 10 minutes Total time with cooking= 30 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups chicken broth

1 can cream of chicken, cream of mushroom, or any creamed soup of your choice

2 Tablespoons Ranch dressing seasoning mix (Vary by taste...I put in 3 Tbsp.)

8 oz. cream cheese, softened, cut into blocks

2 cups shredded chicken (I used chicken BBQ from Thompson's)

(Yes Renee...wet meat, but so worth it.)

2 cups (6 oz) uncooked rotini pasta or pasta of your choice

1 ½ cups of shredded cheddar cheese (or cheese of your choice, I only used ½ cup of grated parmesan cheese, I did not want it that cheesy.)

6 slices of bacon, crisply cooked, about ½ cup (I did not put bacon in mine. I'm watching my fats. (I also added frozen mixed vegetables or fresh broccoli or vegetable of your choice)



★ Steps:

1. In 12-inch nonstick skillet, stir broth, soup, & ranch dressing mix with whisk until well blended.
2. Add cream cheese; cook over medium-high heat 1-2 minutes or until cream cheese starts to melt.
3. Add chicken, pasta, veggies & 1 cup of the cheese of your choice. Heat to boiling. Cover; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, 10-14 minutes or until pasta is tender. Remove from heat.
4. Top with bacon & remaining cheese. Let stand 1-2 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Since it is just Brian & I, it made 2 meals for us & I'm all for reheated meals!

Enjoy!



July 2024



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3		5	6
7 Church in the Grove	8 Council 7pm	9	10 Laymen's Craft Day 10am	11	12	13
14 Church in the Grove	15 VBS WEEK	16 VBS WEEK	17 VBS WEEK	18 VBS WEEK	19 VBS WEEK	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAYS!!!!

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 LISA HOUSE | |
| 7 GABRIELLE BENTLEY | |
| 9 GLADYS SMITH | |
| 10 MATT GOWER | |
| 13 ANGELA FRANTZ, JANET GOWER, JESSIE KEEGAN | 26 KRISTEN CRAMER |
| 17 MARIE CHRISTMAN | 27 RICHARD GETZ, KATELYN HEFFELFINGER
MARK JOHNSON, TAMMY SHERER |
| 18 JOSEPH SHIRGHIO, AMY YAPLE | 28 PATRICIA SCHNEIDER |
| 19 DONNA KIBLER, AMY KOCHER | 29 JARED KREGER, KYLE STROHL |
| 20 JORDAN MECKES | 30 KASEY MECKES |
| 24 FRANCES FRABLE, WILBERT KLEINTOP
JEFF LONG | |