

We are always trying to move on to the next project goal or big idea. We check items off of our to-do lists—or even our "bucket lists"—and then we're on to the next experience. This habit of mind does little to help us engage the depths of the Christian tradition, and nowhere is this more true than in the lessons for the Third Sunday of Easter (April 26th) - Acts 3:12-19; Luke 24:36b-48; 1 John 3:1-7.

Easter was and is about the resurrection, and many North American worshipers seem to assume that now that this has been accomplished, it's time to move on to the next thing—the next denominational priority or the next controversy gaining traction in the 24-hour news cycle. It's counterintuitive to go back to the resurrection—yet there are unfinished implications.

In Acts 3, Peter gives a speech (his second). Having healed a crippled beggar, he senses a teachable moment and speaks to the Israelite leaders. He names their culpability in Jesus' death, but his purpose is their repentance and restoration to God (verse 19). The passage requires sensitivity; it has a history of being used for anti-Semitic purposes. But our default response should not be to ignore this text. Rowan Williams's reflection on it is helpful: the risen Lord is proclaimed first to his enemies.

Biblical scholars distinguish between static and dynamic readings of scripture. A static reading would see Christians as the gentiles who "get it" and Israel as the community that does not get it but is openly resistant. In contrast, a dynamic reading is more confessional: *we* are the ones who resist the gospel, who neglect the voices of the prophets, who have forgotten that the Messiah's vocation is suffering. We are the ones who need to repent.

The epistle lesson again requires us to move past the obvious inference that the "children of God" are good and everyone else is bad. God's children do not always live as children of the light. We are resurrection people, but in many ways we continue to live in the darkness of the tomb. What was John saying to his community in this epistle? Why the emphatic line of purity and morality between the people of God and the outsider? Where is this true today, and where is this contested? Perhaps a modest way forward is to say that we are living into our identities as resurrection people, as children who walk in the light.

This week's Gospel, like last week's, is an appearance story. The risen Lord shows his hands and feet to the disciples, and asks for something to eat. The text is marvelous in its specificity (they remember that the meal included broiled fish!) and materiality ("a ghost does not have flesh and bones"). Along with serving as a witness to the resurrection, the text grounds its community of readers in this world: they will eat meals together, they will suffer as the Messiah suffered, they will forgive one another. All that has happened is continuous with the law, the prophets and the psalms.

The Sundays after Easter connect the resurrection with all that came before it, especially the Hebrew scriptures. We reflect on our own resistance to the gospel and consider how we, as children of the light, bear witness to God's love—or fail to. We consider the material implications of the gospel: the body of Christ, even now, is not a ghost but the real presence of God. We are not finished with Easter yet.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Ramos

LECTIONARY FOR MAY

May 3

Acts: 4:5-12; Psalm 23
I John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

May 10

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31
I John 4:7-12; John 15:1-5

May 17

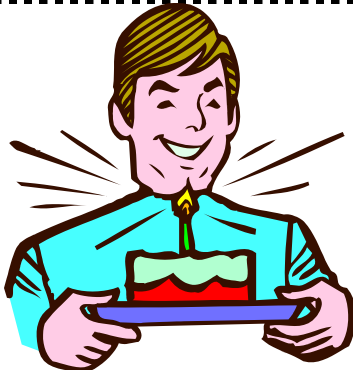
Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98
I John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

May 24

Acts 1:15-17,21-26; Psalm 1
I John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19

May 31

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34,35b
Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15



HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAY TO:

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Kerry Abbott | 2 |
| Laurel Hanns | 3 |
| Richard Woodfield | 4 |
| Irene Modrak | 4 |
| Curtis Burns | 5 |
| Nancy Martinson | 5 |
| Carolyn Franz | 6 |
| Joyce Carhart | 7 |
| Lorraine Carhart | 9 |
| Ethel Strand | 9 |
| Bridget Crespo | 10 |
| Patricia Martinson | 16 |
| Ed Burns | 18 |
| Richard Brinckmann | 20 |
| Evan Schickel | 20 |
| Alan G. Woodfield | 26 |
| Theresa Heinaman | 27 |
| Courtney Martinson | 28 |

.....and many, many more!!!

SOMETHING NEW AND WONDERFUL!!!

We are very pleased to announce that the United Methodist Church of Linden now has a Web page!! we very much appreciate the fact that Jeanne Henel Moore has designed it, is paying for it, and will maintain it for the next few years. It is a donation from her that we are so pleased to receive. Those people who have an email address have already been notified about our brand new Web site. Many of them are choosing to receive the Messenger through their email address rather than receiving it in the mail each month. If you have an email address and we do not have it, please notify the Secretary (Doris Henel 486-5571) so that it can be listed and you can also chose which way you would like to receive the Messenger. Please click on the following link which will give you access to our Web Page:

<http://umclinden.org/>

If you do not have a computer, please check out the web site if you have children or friends that have a computer. I think you will enjoy it.



PLAN TO ATTEND!

On May 10th Ethel Strand will be celebrating her 90th birthday. Her son, Tim, would like to honor her on this special occasion and so he will be hosting a coffee hour following the worship service on Sunday, May 10th. We don't see Ethel too often since she lives with Tim and his wife in Bloomsbury, N. J. The United Methodist Women do try and visit her at least once a year. The United Methodist Women will to helping Tim with this special celebration and we invite all our church members to come and join us as we wish Ethel a wonderful 90th birthday.

District Youth Rally Day 2009
At Drew University in Madison, NJ
Sunday May 3rd 5pm to 8pm
Open to 6th to 12th graders

Free

This is a great opportunity for youth to mingle with their district peers and establish connections for future events. The event includes ice breakers, fun and games in small groups, campus tours, dinner and worship. We especially welcome young people who have been confirmed recently or will be in the near future.

Holy Ground Worship Service @ 7pm with Mark Miller and Rev. Tanya Bennett

Email questions and RSVPs by April 24th to:

bfrankli@drew.edu

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BEST WISHES FROM YOUR FRIENDS IN LINDEN

David and Karen LeDuc are pleased to announce *the engagement of their daughter, Elizabeth, to Mark Langan. Elizabeth and Mark have been going together for about 2 years and Saturday, April 11, 2009 will always be a special day for them. After dinner, on that day, Mark took Beth for a walk through the cherry blossoms in the park in Nutley. Around the back of a tree, they found a partially hidden pink Easter egg (planted by Mom and Dad!) When she opened it, she found an engagement ring and Mark on his knee. She was speechless! After asking a second time, she said "YES". They are looking forward to an August 2010 wedding in the Vincent United Methodist Church in Nutley. As Dave says, "please keep them in your prayers through this time and may the Lord bless their love and lives together."*

Elizabeth's email address is:

lizzyduck02@msn.com

Do you remember when Dave was the minister in our church? Beth was just a little child then! How fast the years have passed!

DID YOU MISS IT?

Jesus, God's Plan for Everyone

The Linden Interfaith Council sponsored our annual Lenten Bible Study in our church this year.

A group from each church attended for one and a half hours each Sunday afternoon during Lent.

We thank the faithful members of our church who supplied the homemade refreshments each Sunday before the Bible Study classes began.

Many thanks to all who participated and who helped in any way. We especially thank the ministers who led in the discussion each week. It is a program that we all look forward to every year.

**Carolyn Franz, Interfaith Representative
from our church**



DONNA (Dee) ETTTEL

We were saddened to hear of the death of Dee Ettel on Wednesday, April 15th at the Delaire Nursing Home, Linden. Dee had been in and out of the hospital a number of times over the past months and was in Delaire this last time for therapy in preparation for returning home. We all thought she was improving but this last week she began to have trouble breathing and took a bad turn on April 15th. Viewing was held at the Leonard-Lee Funeral home, 301 E. Blanck Street, Linden, on Friday April 17th. The funeral service was conducted by our pastor, Rev. Ricardo Ramos on Saturday, April 18th at 10:30 a.m. from the funeral home. The women of the church served a luncheon to the family and friends following entombment in Hollywood Memorial Park, Union. Dee was born and raised in Elizabeth and moved to Linden 11 years ago. She was an active member of the United Methodist Church of Linden and the United Methodist Women. She was employed by the Union County Department of Social Services in Elizabeth for 32 years, retiring in 2002. She was the loving wife of 30 years to Charles J. Ettel, Stepmother to Charles of Pennsylvania and Denise also of Pennsylvania and grandmother of two grandchildren. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins. We extend our deepest sympathy to Charles and his family. Dee will be missed by her loving family and many friends.

This Messenger is a little shorter than usual. Your church secretary has been pretty ill ever since the beginning of the month and the Messenger was mostly put together just in the last few days. I am feeling better each day and I'm sure that everything will be back to normal in the near future. A special "thank you" to Pastor Ramos who has been putting together the church bulletin over Easter and the week following. Such a busy time to get sick!!!!

PRAYER LIST OVER THE LAST MONTH

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Leona Parker | Gertrude Baldwin |
| Charles Lamont | Sharon Lutz |
| Louise Yurinko | Mary Jones |
| Mycroft Laryea | Anne Ogier |
| GeorgenneEastman | Mary Dalziel |
| Roni Hanns | Mary Barnes |
| Family of Dee Ettel | Steve Lutz |

Please continue your prayers for all of the above



DISCIPLESHIP (membership) CLASSES TO BE HELD

Are you interested in joining the United Methodist Church of Linden? A number of people have expressed their interest in taking part in the Discipleship classes in preparation for joining. We already have a number signed up and would welcome any others interested. Classes are set up for the following dates:

SUNDAYS - 9:00 TO 9:45 am (before church)

- APRIL 19
- APRIL 26
- May 3
- May 17
- May 34

Looking forward to seeing you!

CONFIRMATION & DISCIPLESHIP CLASSES

Rev. Ramos has announced that he will be having the Confirmation and Discipleship (membership) classes meeting at the same time – Sunday mornings from 9 to 9:45 a.m. before the church service.

He is finding it very interesting having some of the young people meet with older potential members. So if, as you come into church through Aldersgate Hall and you see Rev. Ramos meeting with this group, you will know that they have interesting discussions going on.

We are very pleased that we have people attending from both groups and we look forward to their joining our church family,



NOTICE

We realize that the 90th birthday celebration for Ethel Strand will be on Sunday, May 10th, Mother’s Day, but we hope you will be able to stay for a short visit with Ethel and then return home for your own celebration.

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A NOTICE TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE NO LONGER MEMBERS BUT HAVE BEEN DONATING TO THE CHURCH TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE MESSENGER

If you have an email address and are willing to have the monthly Messenger sent to you through your email, we will no longer ask for a donation to continue receiving the Messenger. There is no charge for stamps, paper or ink since you will receive it directly through your email address. We encourage you to receive it directly – it will not only save you money but there will be no cost involved for the church either. See! there is something FREE in this world!!

We have always sent the Messenger to all of our previous ministers, and we will now begin to send them the monthly mailing through their email addresses. If we do not have your email address, please send it to us so that you can get the newsletter directly.

We also ask that any members that have an email address also let us know and we will send yours to that address.. What a saving in time, supplies and stamps this can be for you and the church.

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TO OUR ADVERTISERS. & RENTERS

Your ads now appear on our Web Site so that anyone checking the site will also be able to click on to the link and your ad. We are happy to be able to include this at no additional charge for you.

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THANK YOU!

A special thank you from the Linden Free Public Library and the Friends of the Linden Library, to those people who supported the fund-raiser by purchasing a meal at the Linden House on April 1st. All money raised will be put towards the purchase of furnishing the inside of the Library. when the building is completed. Almost \$1,000. profit was realized and we could not have done it without you and the full cooperation of the Linden House. They not only didn’t collect the coupons, but gave us a larger percentage of all business that day and the following weekend. We thank everyone for helping to make this such a success. The Linden House has offered to do this again but for a full week and we intend to take them up on this offer.

When you stop in for a meal at the Linden House, please thank them for their generosity.

MAY 2009

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 <i>9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School</i> |
| 3 <i>8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Church School 10:30-Worship Service</i> | 4 <i>7 PM – Board of Trustees: B.Carhart,B.Losyk, J.Valdez,J.Stamer, D.Beyer,T.Henel, W.Hanns 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 5 <i>11:30 AM - United Methodist Women 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 6 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 7 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 8 | 9 <i>9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School</i> |
| 10 <i>8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Church School 10:30-Worship Service ETHEL STRAND 90th BIRTHDAY – COFFEE HOUR IN ALDERSGATE HALL</i> | 11 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 12 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 13 <i>7 PM – Adminstrative Council 4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 14 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 15 | 16 <i>9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School</i> |
| 17 <i>8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Church School 10:30-Worship Service</i> | 18 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 19 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 20 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 21 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 22 | 23 <i>9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School</i> |
| 24 <i>8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Church School 10:30-Worship Service</i> | 25 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 26 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 27 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 28 <i>4:30-9:30 PM - Fencing School</i> | 29 | 30 <i>9:30-1:30 PM - Fencing School</i> |
| 31 <i>8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Church School 10:30-Worship Service</i> | | | | | | |