


The Good-Newsletter
February 2012



St. John's Center United Church of Christ
A Faithful and Welcoming Church
432 Reading Road, East Earl, Pa 17519
Bradley J. Haws, Pastor
Phone (717) 445-5622 or www.stjohnscenterucc.org



VISION STATEMENT

Centering in the Spirit of Christ through humbling ourselves, accepting and acknowledging Jesus as Lord and Savior, committing to and obeying him, and growing and providing the Life-giving love that he commands; the Vision of St. John's Center

United Church of Christ is to provide an environment in Christ whereby one can strengthen and fulfill his/her commitment to a loving relationship with God and others.

2012 CONSISTORY

(The Consistory serves as the executive body of this church, conducting the administrative business of the church, particularly in regards to fiscal and facility oversight.)

ELDERS

(Assist and support the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church serving as advisors and counselors of the pastor in his office.)

Doug Beaver ('12) - Moderator (presides over and sets agenda for Consistory meeting), **Jim Ertzgard ('13)** - Vice Moderator, **Leanne Smith ('14)**

DEACONS

(Assist and support the pastor in those ministrations which pertain to the more outward needs of the congregation, aiding in securing necessary funds for the support of the church's work and laboring among the people in making known to them the needs of the church.)

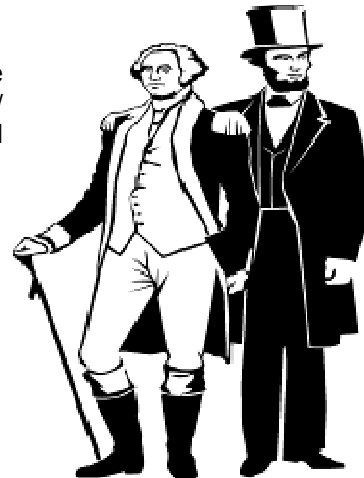
Jim Franck ('12), **Gail Lorah ('12)**, **Alvin Martin ('12)**, **Caleb Haws ('13)**, **Lisa Showalter ('13)**, **Ken Boley ('14)** - Head Deacon, **Sharon Canull ('14)**

TRUSTEES

(Have the care and custody of the property of the church, overseeing it's accessibility, maintenance and security.)

John Eberly ('12), **Shawn Mohler ('12)**, **Harold Bair ('13)**, **Mark Musselman ('14)** - Head Trustee

Please be sure to contact any of these individuals should you have needs and/or concerns regarding the ministry and life of St. John's Center UCC.



February

2012 CONTACT PEOPLE

Moderator: Doug Beaver
Vice Moderator: Jim Ertzgard
Church Secretary: Sherri Mohler-sherrimohler.stjohnsctr@frontiernet.net
Newsletter Editor: Abby Eberly
Facility Rental (Sanctuary, Social Hall, Pavilion): Sherri Mohler
sherrimohler.stjohnsctr@frontiernet.net

Finances:

Church Treasurer: Arlene Zimmerman
Financial Secretary: Arlene Zimmerman
Head Deacon: Ken Boley

Facility Upkeep & Maintenance:

Head Trustee: Mark Musselman
Church Custodian: Shirley Gehman
Kitchen Supervisor: Dory Homan
Church Key Contact: Carl Hilt
Church Cemetery Information: Dave Shrom

Worship Ministries:

Worship Team: Dave Shrom
Sr. Choir: Debbie Ball
Drama Team: Debbie & Richard Ball
Praise Band: Robin Rohrer
Altar Guild: Sherri Mohler—sherrimohler.stjohnsctr@frontiernet.net
Worship Nursery: Sherri Mohler—sherrimohler.stjohnsctr@frontiernet.net
Acolytes: Pastor Haws – bradhaws.stjohnsctr@frontiernet.net
Technology Team: Jim Ertzgard
Sound System: Frank Majeske
John Styer
Greeters: Sharon Good

Inreach and Outreach Ministries:

Outreach Team:
Compassion Team: Terry Showalter
Fellowship Team: Bill Gable
Benevolence Team: Menno Eby
Evangelism Team: Bob Kovall
Women's Ministry: Debbie Ball
Men's Breakfast: Bob Wenger

Instruction Steward:

Adult Instruction Team: Larry Martin
Adult Sunday School Superintendent: Bob Wenger
Primary Instruction Team: Linda Burkhart
Teacher Support Team: Jen Boley
Beth Zueno
Music Team: Kim Franck & Heather Martin
Activities Team: Sharon Haas
Carolyn Walker
Children's Church: Sue Sanger
Sunday School Hour Nursery:
Library: Rhea Eshelman & Tammy Sebastian
Youth Instruction Team—Doug Beaver

CARING AND OUTREACH

John 15:16...”but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.” Join us as we embrace the opportunities God is providing, to show His love and care, in and through St. John’s Center.

Women’s Ministry – All lady members and friends of St. John’s Center. Our mission is to nurture loving, lasting, meaningful relationships with God and others. See Women’s Ministry page in this newsletter.

Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group – All 7th – 12th grade youth. Grow in your relationship with God and each other through fellowship, discipleship, ministry, worship and evangelism activities.

Campus Connection – Keeping our students updated with the activities of St. John’s Center to make them feel connected, even while away at college.

Outreach – The vision statement of St. John’s Center UCC Mission/Outreach Committee is to serve God and others through the following Mission Statement: (A) Provide food for the hungry, (B) Provide clothes for the naked, (C) To support and comfort the hurting, (D) To support and comfort the sick, (E) To do visitation and acquire relationships.

Men’s Ministry – All gentlemen members and friends of St. John’s Center. Offering opportunities for spiritual and relational growth through various fellowship and study groups.

Expectant Parent Support – Outreach designed for couples expecting a baby.

Cradle Roll – Outreach designed to support couples upon the birth of a baby.

Greeters – Individuals to greet and welcome all persons to our Sunday morning worship. Contact person is Sharon Good.

Visitation Ministers - A ministry designed to share the love of Christ with members of our St. John’s Center family.

Pen-Pal Ministry – A ministry meant to extend the hand of Christian fellowship to members of our church family who are not able to fellowship with us in person.

Prayer Shawl Ministry - Providing comfort, support and prayer for those who are hurting through shawls made by members of this ministry. Contact Person - Katie Majeske

Hospitality Team: Provide a welcoming and friendly face to anyone who may be visiting our worship. Contact persons – Bob and Kathy Wenger.

FROM A MINISTER TO THE MINISTERS

Wow!

Here I am typing up a newsletter article for a *February* newsletter. Christmas has passed.

The New Year has come and has one month in already.

And now we're on the threshold of Lent.

Lent . . . a time to give serious reflection on our sinful lives. Yes, I said *sinful*.

I realize *sin* is not a popular word in today's vocabulary. But then again, it never has been a favorite topic for dinner table discussion.

And yet, frankly, we cannot discuss more pleasing topics like *salvation, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness*, or a *relationship with God* without acknowledging, confessing, and reflecting on sin, *our sin, my sin, your sin*.

From what have I been and hope to be saved?

Why do I need continual reaffirmation and confirmation of God's love?

From what do I need forgiveness?

What has caused me to be put in a position of valuing and desiring grace and mercy?

What keeps me from having a healthy, abundant relationship with God?

The answer, my friend, to each question? *Sin*. That pesky, disturbing, frustrating little three-letter-word.

Now I did *not* say that Lent is a time to *wallow* in our sin. I did *not* say Lent is a time to *punish* ourselves for our sin. I'm saying Lent is a time for confession, reflection, and proper perspective on that which keeps us from fully walking with Christ, that in our lives that keeps putting Jesus back on that cross, that which requires salvation, love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and a relationship with God.

Lent is *not* a time to beat ourselves up. It's *not* a 40-day period of "how far can we put ourselves down." It's *not* seven weeks with a big "L" (for "Loser") or "S" (for "Sinner") on your forehead.

Lent is a season to consider the depths to which our sinful nature takes us and out of which Christ's act of sacrificial love on the cross has brought us.

Lent is a time to admit, confess, agree with God that we have fallen short of His glory, a glory that eventually shined forth from a cross. It is a time to admit, confess, agree with God that we are *now* no different than those who denied, betrayed, and abandoned Jesus *then*.

Yet Lent is a time to surrender ourselves into the hands of He who still says, "Come to me, all you who are weak and heavy-laden and I will give you rest." It is a time to humbly kneel before the One who worked it out that "*while we were still sinners*, He sent His Son for us" (Romans 5:8).

Lent is a time to ponder such unbelievable mercy, grace, and love, while acknowledging the sin in our lives that cries out for such mercy, grace, and love.

Stay tuned for information on LENT BIBLE STUDY during the weeks of Lent. But Bible Study or no Bible Study, let God help you stop, look, and listen to your heart and life, sinful as it is, so He can show you the glory of the crucifixion and resurrection of His Son, our Savior and Lord.

Pastor Brad



We do NOT yet have a completed roster and theme for this year's LENTEN LUNCHEs but the Terre Hill/Bowmansville Ministerium is again having LENTEN LUNCHEs each THURSDAY in Lent starting on Thursday, February 23 through April, 5 @ 12:00-1:00 pm at St. John's Center UCC.

Each week a different church or duo of church's will provide a light lunch (soup, sandwiches, dessert) and a pastor from that church will share a message. All in an hour.

PACK WELL

During Lent, as we focus on Christ's journey to the cross, let's also examine the journey of our lives. The first task when leaving on any adventure is packing. What have you placed in your bag? Are you weighed down with temptations, self-doubt, money worries, relationship troubles? Have you overlooked any important items? Maybe your bag feels too empty for the challenges ahead. Remember to pack mercy, grace and forgiveness.

Thanks to Easter, we know that our journey in Christ continues, even when the road becomes difficult. So as you prepare for Lent, carry with you the hope made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.



Service Opportunities

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT UCC HOMES

**UCC Homes invites you to take the opportunity to join our ministry to the aging by sharing your time and talents in a variety of different ways.

- Lead Bible Study (short term/long term)
- Assist staff on trips and outings
- Offer specialized programs (music, art, travel, etc.)
- Transport residents to and from events on campus
- Spend one-to-one time with residents
- Serve on the Auxiliary of UCC Homes
- Serve on sub-committees of the Board of Directors
 - Building & Long Range Planning
 - Finance
 - By-Laws
 - Nominating
 - Personnel
 - Quality Assurance
 - Public Relations and Development
 - Spiritual Life

**Volunteer orientation will be provided.

If you would like to share your time and talents with the residents of UCC Homes, please contact one of the following communities of UCC Homes:

**The Lebanon Valley Home (Annville) 867-4467
Thornwald Home (Carlisle) 249-4118
Ephrata Manor (Ephrata) 738-4940
Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home (Carlisle) 245-2187
Kindred Place at Annville 867-5572
Kindred Place at Harrisburg 657-7900
Administrative Office (Camp Hill) 303-1502**

Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration!

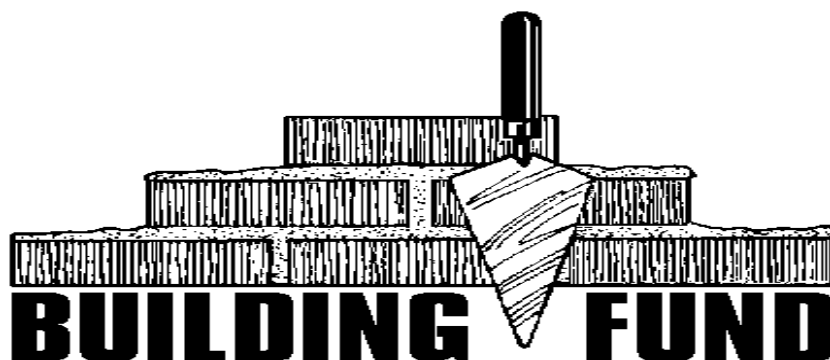
Celebrating a



Karli Armbrust	3
David Fisher	3
Peggy Paul	3
Trudy Auker	5
Brandi Styer	6
George Styer	8
Benjamin Metz	9
Mark Musselman	10
Alex Aharonian	11
Alton Lorah	11
Nicole Dorwart	12
Eva Brooks	12
Noah Good	12
Katy Musselman	12
Nancy Weaver	12

FEBRUARY

Andrew Mayes	13
Rich Heck	17
Ryan Marks	19
Tyler Musselman	20
Adam Zeni	20
Kristine Koch	21
Matthew Smith	21
Thomas Stauffer	22
Lauren Eby	23
Stan Stoltzfus	23
Doug Wright	24
Angie Styer	26
Beatrice Siegel	28
Stan Good	29



Receipts: Jan—Dec. 2011

Offerings	\$ 3,940.00
Interest	261.41
Memorials	960.00
Organ	.00
Bequest	5,000.00

Total Receipts: \$10,161.41

Disbursements:

Transfer from memorial to checking	\$ 350.00
Ck. #257 From Memorial for Library	\$ 1,200.00

Balance 12/31/11 \$ 38,467.97

Balance Includes:

Building Maintenance	\$ 23,897.21
Organ Fund	\$ 1,539.97
Memorials	\$ 8,024.24
Bequest	\$ 5,006.55

SENIOR MOMENT



Open my eyes this day Dear God, and show me what needs to be done. Guide me throughout this day and keep me mindful of all I say. I dedicate this day to You. Amen

The best way to save face is to keep the bottom part of it closed.



Church and Sunday School Offering

Jan.-Dec. 2011	\$217,102.50
Needed to meet Budget	\$209,507.00

Benevolence Receipts	
Jan.—Dec.	\$60,731.50
Needed to meet Budget	\$59,708.00

Other Offerings: (Non-Budget)	
FWC	\$ 2,479.00
UCC	\$ 2,723.00
Feeding the Homeless in Lanc. & Phila.	\$ 274.00
Souper Bowl (Feb.6)	\$ 221.50

Average Attendance:		
January—139	February—140	September—145
March—148	April—177	October—121
May—131	June—168	November—148
July—114	August—80	December—162

SPECIAL DATES

- African-American History Month
- Boy Scout Sunday, February 5, 2012
- Valentine's Day, February 14, 2012
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 19, 2012
- Presidents Day, February 20, 2012
- Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2012
- First Sunday in Lent, February 26, 2012



FORGIVENESS Game

Try this twist on musical chairs.

What you need:

- 28 large index cards
- Black marker
- Two teams of people
- Radio or CD player

What you do:

1. On index cards, write out *forgiveness*, one letter per card. Make two sets (two F's, two O's, etc.).
2. Mix up the cards and form them face up in a circle on the floor. (You'll have six blanks mixed in.)
3. Have teams mix themselves up and stand in a circle around the cards. Ask an extra person to turn the music on and off.
4. As the music plays, teams walk around the circle. When the music stops, players each pick up the card nearest them.
5. Team members take their cards to a designated area and try to spell forgiveness. Any double letters or blanks go back to the "music person," who reorganizes remaining cards, spacing them evenly into a fresh circle.
6. Play continues until one team spells *forgiveness*.

CHILDREN



MY HEART HOUSE

I Corinthians 6:19, 20

"I'm glad I know the Holy Spirit is a person and that He is God," Carol spoke half aloud. "But I think the most wonderful thing is what our teacher told us today. I heard it very clearly. She said, 'The Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every boy and girl who has truly received Christ as his Savior.'"

Yes, Carol was right! God's Word says so! He is our *Stay-Within* Friend!.





FOLLOW GOD'S EXAMPLE

In a letter to the church in Colossae, the apostle Paul wrote about the importance of forgiveness.

•••• DIRECTIONS ••••

To complete Colossians 3:13 (NIV), use the smaller words to fill in the larger words.



gain as or ear van an for give
gave her on it one other he an a

B _____ w _____ h each
ot _____ d _____ give
_____ e an _____ if _____ y
of you h _____ grie _____ ce
a _____ st some _____ .
For _____ as t _____ L _____ d
for _____ you.”

COLOSSIANS 3:13, NIV

Answers: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."
Colossians 3:13, NIV



Time Out For Women

A SPECIAL PLACE

Zephaniah 3
Anne Christian Buchanan

When I was nine, my dad was in graduate school, and we lived in campus housing for married students. That meant concrete floors, grungy walls, wall-to-wall beds, a torn Naugahyde sofa and no pets. But there was a big field next door where we could run and catch bugs. There was a swing set in back under a big sweet Gum tree; we could swing really high and kick the sweet gum balls. And just around the corner was my forsythia playhouse.

The bush had grown large in a circular pattern spreading long, willow like branches out from its trunk until they touched the ground a foot or so away. This created a kind of tunnel around the trunk. I could crawl in from behind and be completely out of sight behind the curtain of branches.

It was a great place to hide, to read, to play, to daydream. In winter, it was dry and crackly and protected from the wind. In summer, it was cool and green, soaked in leafy shadow. But early spring was best, when the whole bush was covered in bright yellow flowers. Even the light inside my playhouse was yellow.

It's one of my most exotic memories—spending an afternoon in a little room made up entirely of golden blooms. Sitting there made me feel both safe and excited, free but protected—and incredibly privileged. I mean, most of my friends had more stuff than I did, but *nobody* had a playhouse made of flowers!

Remembering that special place gives me a beautiful picture of what it means to be surrounded by God's love. I seem to spend much of my life in grungy surroundings doing what needs to be done. Whenever the grayness pulls me down, I need to stop, close my eyes and see myself as I really am—God's child, tucked safely inside his care, incredibly privileged and utterly surrounded by beautiful, golden light.

WAYSIDE SHRINES

Along European and Latin American roads, especially in Catholic countries, it's common to encounter sculptures of Jesus, Mary or another religious image, often set within a little shelter. People have erected these wayside shrines for centuries to mark an important event's location, indicate a parish boundary or help a traveler find the way. They may be at crossroads, on hilltops or along stretches of open road. The shrines allow travelers to pause, offer prayers and turn heart and mind to God.

What places in your life serve as wayside shrines, encouraging you to turn to God? For many Christians, weekly worship is such a place. Daily devotional reading might be a wayside shrine for you. Could the "empty" time not of your choosing, between jobs or other life experiences, be a wayside shrine, inviting you to step off the road and rest, pray and listen to God? When you take up your journey again, heart refreshed, remember that God always walks with you.

+ Christian Symbols +

This number appears many times in Scripture, often indicating a time of trial or testing, or simply marking something significant. It rained 40 days and nights during the Great Flood. Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus fasted for 40 days and was with the disciples for 40 days between his resurrection and ascension. Taking this symbolic number to heart, the Christian church has long observed 40 days of Lent (not counting Sundays).



WALKING WITH GOD

The essence of the Christian life is knowing God and walking with him. It's about sticking with him when the sky is blue and also when it's filled with clouds or choked with smoke. It's about walking with the Lord through thick and thin, and pressing on through every heart-ache and trial that happens to come our way.

—Greg Laurie



NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Psalm 46:1, 10-11, KJV

Where do you turn when unexpected tragedy strikes? Cleland McAfee, a Presbyterian minister in Chicago, had just received word that his brother and sister-in-law had lost both of their daughters to diphtheria within twenty-four hours. Grief-stricken, McAfee couldn't think of deep theological issues; he could only think of verses in the book of Psalms that brought comfort and rest to those who sought refuge in the Lord. As he meditated on God's Word, he wrote the words and music to this simple hymn.

At the double funeral, outside the darkened, quarantined house of his brother, Cleland McAfee with a choking voice sang this hymn publicly for the first time. The following Sunday, his church choir sang it from their pastor's handwritten copy.

McAfee went on to become a well-known theologian, writing books and scholarly articles, but today he is perhaps best known for the words of comfort he was able to offer in a family crisis.

There is a place of quiet rest
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.

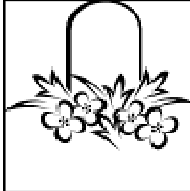
*O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.*

There is a place of comfort sweet
Near to the heart of God,
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release
Near to the heart of God,
A place where all is joy and peace,
Near to the heart of God.

Cleland Boyd, McAfee (1866-1944)

CENTER UNION CEMETERY UPDATE



Lot prices per grave are \$300.00. One set of 4 corner posts are required at an additional cost of \$180.00; there is also an additional fee for the deed. Please contact our Cemetery Chairman, Dave Shrom at 717-445-5389 for further information .

We ask that you obey the signs regarding the placement and removal of decorations. **Please Note: NO GLASS CONTAINERS PERMITTED.**

Our biggest expense this year will be the cost of mowing and trimming. Your donations are always appreciated.

“O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO”

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

George Matheson (1842-1906) wrote the words to this much-loved hymn while feeling intensely lonely and afraid.

Years back, his fiancé had broken their engagement upon learning he was going blind. Despite that challenge, Matheson had followed God’s call to a fruitful pastoral ministry — with his sister’s assistance. Now his sister was getting married, and Matheson worried about who would take care of him and if anyone would ever want to marry him.

Amid such despair, Matheson later shared, God gave him all four verses of this hymn in five minutes. It’s a poignant reminder that God’s love sustains us even when human love falls short.

- “To love another person is to see the face of God.”
—Lyrics from Les Misérables, Claude-Michel Schönberg
- “If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”
—Anne Bradstreet
- “Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof.”
—Kahlil Gibran

OUR MISSIONARIES

**Alan, Carol, Dylan
Cerys, Brenin Wert**
Wales, United Kingdom

Dawn Crowther
Mercy Ships

TRANSFIGURATION

All over this magnificent world, God calls us to extend his kingdom of shalom-peace and wholeness — of justice, of goodness, of compassion, of caring, of sharing, of laughter, of joy, of reconciliation. God is transfiguring the world right this very moment through us because God believes in us and because God loves us.

What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And as we share God's love with our brothers and sisters, God's other children, there is no tyrant who can resist us, no opposition that cannot be ended, no hunger that cannot be fed, no wound that cannot be healed, no hatred that cannot be turned into love, no dream that cannot be fulfilled.

—Desmond Tutu, God Has a Dream

DISABILITY AWARENESS

A friend tearfully shared how an usher asked her to leave a church service because of her squirmy toddler. But the boy wasn't just having a bad morning; he was born with a genetic disorder called Fragile X, which makes it nearly impossible to sit quietly.

It was nearly a year before that mother attended a church again. Then she found one with a shepherd program, where trained volunteers help children with special needs participate in worship, Sunday school and church activities.

As we look for ways to reach out to people with disabilities, remember that God's love has no limits. How can we, as God's church, reflect that love?



Remember Our Homebound Members

Cork & Shirley Wright

Nancy Good

Mary Stamm

Mary Ludwig

Barbara Weinhold
Denver Nursing Home

Dottie Leininger
Landis Homes

Clarence Hagy
Denver Nursing Home

Kathryn Hartranft
Zerbe Sisters

Charles & Pearl Shirk
Fairmount Homes Retirement Community

Bea & Judy Siegel
Landis Homes

Christine Harrison
Lancashire

Rhea Eshelman
Ephrata Manor

Naomi Weaver

LEARNING FROM PETER'S MISTAKES

In Mark 9:2-10, Jesus takes three disciples up a mountain, where his clothes become dazzling white and Moses and Elijah speak with him. Terrified, Peter starts babbling. He offers to construct three “dwellings” — presumably, worship structures. But Peter makes two common mistakes.

First, he fails to treat Jesus as the unique object of worship. Just as Peter would have worshiped Moses and Elijah alongside Jesus, we sometimes act as though money, work, another person or even church and Scripture are coequal with Christ. Obviously, family and friends are important, but Jesus is the only Son of God. The church and the Bible, though worthy of devotion, are only vehicles that bring us to Christ.

Second, Peter would have stayed on that mountain indefinitely. Spiritual highs are tempting that way. We resist going back “down” to daily life. Ecstatic glimpses of Jesus’ glory are one way God strengthens us to continue serving in Christ’s name.

ST. VALENTINE’S SACRIFICE

Every February 14, we celebrate the loved ones in our lives with cards, flowers and chocolate. But Valentine’s Day has another meaning that’s been lost.

First declared a holiday by King Henry VIII of England in 1537, it commemorates the beheading of St. Valentine on February 14, 270 A.D. His crime? Performing wedding ceremonies after Roman Emperor Claudius II had outlawed marriage.

Valentine was martyred for faithfully doing the work God had given him. Although it’s good to celebrate love and marriage, let’s also remember the courage of a man who gave his life following his convictions.

OLD ENOUGH TO SERVE

In a worship committee meeting, much debate occurred about the minimum age for acolytes. “If kids can’t reach the pulpit to place the Bible, then they shouldn’t be allowed to carry it,” some said. Others complained that young participants didn’t carry the cross straight enough or that their childish delight seemed irreverent.

The conversation seemed to overshadow the central question: “Who gets to serve?” Does God’s calling have limits? Shouldn’t our faithful, joyful hearts, not our talents or abilities, define the quality of our service?

REFOCUS FOR LENT

Give up complaining — focus on gratitude.
Give up harsh judgments — think kind thoughts.
Give up worry — trust God to provide.
Give up discouragement — be full of hope.
Give up bitterness — turn to forgiveness.
Give up hatred — return good for evil.
Give up anger — be more patient.
Give up pettiness — become mature.
Give up jealousy — pray for trust.
Give up gossiping — control your tongue.
Give up sin — turn to virtue.
Give up giving up — persevere.

—Author unknown



BIBLE QUIZ

During Jesus' time in the wilderness after his baptism, Satan tempted him to do three things. Which of the following was not one of the temptations?

- A. To change water into wine so wedding guests would know he was God's Son
- B. To throw himself down from the top of the temple, expecting angels to save him
- C. To turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger
- D. To worship Satan in order to gain all the world's kingdoms

Answer: A (See Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.)

PRONOUN SHIFT

Society encourages us to focus on ourselves. The pronouns in the parable of the rich man indicate that he fell into this trap, too: "He talked to himself: 'What can I do? My barn isn't big enough for this harvest. ... I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll gather in all my grain and goods, and I'll say to myself, Self, you've done well!'" (Luke 12:16-19, The Message).

What a difference other pronouns would have made. The man could have asked, "What would you have me do, God?" He could have seen things as God's, on loan to him to share with others: "This barn you've blessed me with, God, isn't big enough for this harvest you've provided. I'll share the extra with others, as you've commanded."

And instead of taking credit himself, he could have offered praise: "God, you've cared so well for me. Thank you, Lord!"

THE BIBLE LIVES

Generation follows generation

- yet it lives.

Nations rise and fall

- yet it lives.

Kings, dictators, rulers come and go

- yet it lives.

Torn, condemned, burned

- yet it lives.

Hated, despised, cursed

- yet it lives.

Doubted, suspected, criticized

- yet it lives.

Damned by atheists

- yet it lives.

Scoffed at by scorners

- yet it lives.

Exaggerated by fanatics

- yet it lives.

Misconstrued and misstated

- yet it lives.

Ranted and raved about

- yet it lives.

Its inspiration denied

- yet it lives.

Yet it lives

- as a lamp to our feet.

Yet it lives

- as a light to our paths.

Yet it lives

- as the gate to Heaven.

Yet it lives

- as a standard for childhood.

Yet it lives

- as a guide for youth.

Yet it lives

- as an inspiration for the matured.

Yet it lives

- as a comfort for the aged.

Yet it lives

- as food for the hungry.

Yet it lives

- as water for the thirsty.

Yet it lives

- as rest for the weary.

Yet it lives

- as light for the heathen.

Yet it lives

- as salvation for the sinner.

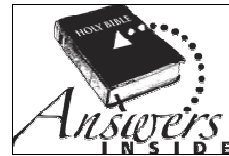
Yet it lives

- as grace for the believer.

To know it is to love it.

To love it is to accept it.

To accept it means life eternal.





*Deadline
For The
March Issue*

February 12

*St. John's Center United Church of Christ
432 Reading Road
East Earl, PA 17519*

