



NEW CREATION NEWS

May ~ June 2024

St. Peter's United Church of Christ

1475 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca, NY 14224

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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

I spoke with several other pastors or members of other churches and they all agreed with me that this past Easter brought out quite a crowd this year. We had 62 in attendance and it most certainly looked like a full sanctuary, especially when we all stood up together. Strike the Rock's music was incredible, Donna Albert did the Easter version of "Hallelujah" with back up from Strike the Rock and people took seriously the invitation to put fresh flowers on the cross and then getting photos of it with people in front of it. The hymns were ones everyone seemed to know, which meant the singing was great. I preached off the resurrection account from John. I know that, as a pastor, I always hope that Christmas Eve and Easter brings out those who aren't regular attenders and that happened this past Easter Sunday. We will move into the season of Pentecost on May 19th, a time to recall the Holy Spirit's role in our lives today.

We will again have the Memorial Service on May 26th. There will be time to remember those who have died over the course of the year who were members at St. Peter's as well as having the military people with us again. We have become a popular church to welcome those in the veteran organizations from West Seneca and treat them to a time of fellowship and food following worship. This is usually a very moving service and I hope you will put it on your calendar so you can join us. Worship is a huge part of what makes a church. Come and worship with us soon.

In Christ,
Pastor Paula



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: *Please call ahead.

The church office hours are Monday – Thursday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The office is closed on Fridays.

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS: *Please call ahead.

Rev. Paula will be in the office on Tuesdays from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm and Thursdays from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

PASTORAL CARE

Rev. Paula Gustafson is available to provide pastoral care for members of St. Peter's congregation. Rev. Paula can be reached by phone at 716-476-9261 or by email at pastorpaula2021@gmail.com.

COUNCIL CORNER

Your Church Council meets regularly to manage the overall spiritual and business matters of the church. Upcoming Council meetings are scheduled for May 20, June 17, and July 22, starting at 7:00 pm, with an open forum available until 7:15. The deacons and elders also meet individually to discuss more specific items. One task the deacons have focused on recently is a complete inventory of all church items. The elders are asking for additional people to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings, and increased participation in hosting the monthly fellowship gatherings after worship. Please sign up on the sheets in the church entrance if you are interested in being a greeter or hosting a fellowship hour, or see a Council member if you have any questions.

St. Peter's Council 2024

President/Deacon	Marina Heppner
Vice President/Elder	Sandy Fiegl
Treasurer/Deacon	Donna Albert
Financial Secretary/Elder	Sue Beier
Secretary/Deacon	Christel Kasprzak
Elder	Karen Buranich
Elder	Paul Gannon
Deacon	Kathy Reandeau
Trustees	Linda Richards
	Brian Welsh



Spring Clean Up Day – May 11

Game Night – May 17

Memorial Day Candle Cross Service – May 26

Game Night – June 21

Craft & Vendor Show – August 3

Meat Raffle – October 18

ENCIRCLING IN OUR PRAYERS...

FOR GOD'S HEALING

Renae Johnson; Marge Applebach; Esther Woltz; John Sworen; Chuck and Irene Brooks; Tim and Sue Schrader; Milton and Elenore Keim; Janet Hunt; Audrey Seaman; Dorothy Probst; Esther Heppner; Family of Judy Pahnos; Prayers for those lost, injured and traumatized by the mass shootings across the U.S.; Continued prayers for the people of Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East.

FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

For **those in the hospital and with medical problems** known only to God and their loved ones.

For **all victims of violence.**

For all **Gold Star parents** – those who have lost sons or daughters in the military—may God be with them and comfort them in their time of loss.

FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY:

Earle C. Heusinger III ★★ ★ Army

Justin Hurlburt ★★ ★ Army National Guard

Jacob Krugel ★★ ★ Army

Kristin McDermott ★★ ★ Navy

Caleb Tolley ★★ ★ Air Force

Holly Tolley ★★ ★ Air Force

Jack Welsh ★★ ★ Marine Corps

And for all firefighters, EMTs, law enforcement & border officers.



Dear St. Peter's UCC-
Thank you so much!
Your kindness does not go unnoticed.
Thank you all so much for providing a delicious Easter dinner for our residents, alumni, and working staff members. Your continued support is a blessing to us.
Friends of Plymouth

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

We will continue to have Fellowship Hour once a month after worship service; on the third Sunday of each month. Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will be served during winter months while iced tea, lemonade, and cold drinks will be served during the warmer months.



All are welcome and we hope you will join us!

St. Peter's UCC....

Faith, Fellowship and Service

Faith in Christ,

Welcoming **Fellowship**

and Loving **Service**

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our dear friend Judy Pahnos on April 22, 2024 at home with family present, under hospice care.



Time of greeting for family and friends will be Saturday, May 4 from 8:30 am - 10:30 am at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca, in the glass foyer. The memorial service will begin at 10:30 am in the sanctuary.

Please keep Judy's family in your prayers.



Judy Pahnos was a longtime member of our church family. Just prior to her death, she sent the following short, handwritten note reflecting her love for her St. Peter's church family. Her presence will surely be missed by all.

Hi All,

Thinking of all of you - music, babies, greeters! My legs are not cooperating, but I have hopes and prayers that I will get to see you all soon! Blessings to you all!!

*Love & Best Wishes,
Judy P.*





MISSION MUSINGS

Submitted by
Kathy Reandeau

Sharing Christ's love and peace with all!

Spring is officially here and, as always, we experienced mixed weather with both days of warmth and days of snow, combined with the exhilaration of the solar eclipse. The Lenten and Easter seasons are behind us, and St. Peter's, once again, provided ample Easter dinner blessings to families in our congregation and the community. Everyone was extremely generous, and we were easily able to feed several families as well as the young men at Plymouth Crossroads. Each family even received a cute basket full of Easter treats, and a donor on Facebook volunteered to provide yummy candy for Plymouth. Please continue to support Mission projects whenever possible.

MISSION MOMENTS: In the past we enjoyed hearing from Plymouth Crossroads and Phebian Abdulai during worship services as part of our mission ministry. We discussed doing something like this on a quarterly basis with other non-profit organizations in our community, to learn more about what they are doing. Our first experience will occur April 14. We look forward to hearing from Andrea Walh of Kevin Guest House, and inviting more speakers in the future.

SIERRA LEONE/JERICHO ROAD GLOBAL OUTREACH: Phebian Abdulai continues her medical mission at the Adama Martha Memorial Community Health Center in Sierra Leone. Thank you for supporting this life-transforming work by donating money through the bi-monthly envelopes and gently-used clothing to the clothing shed. Learn more at <https://www.jrchc.org> and visit the global work tab.



PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS: St. Peter's contributed to an overflow of Easter Blessings at Plymouth! Jenn McAndrew reported that, strangely enough, the guys were a bit camera shy regarding pictures for Easter dinner – somehow they seemed more interested in the food! They lined up for dinner as soon as they were told it was ready, and were all business! The yummy



Jenn and celebrate this new chapter together.

Not to be lost in all the excitement is the news that one resident, Kadyn, successfully transitioned from being at Plymouth Crossroads to living in his own apartment, which he will share with a roommate. Kadyn maintained a savings account and held a job throughout his entire stay with Plymouth. He even left with a car! He is in his last semester of college, and is on track to graduate in May with a degree in Construction Management. Visit www.plymouthcrossroads.org for more info.

CLOTHING SHED: The clothing shed collects and redistributes gently-used clothing to organizations and people all over the world, and it continues to receive a great deal of donations every week. We use funds raised to support Phebian Abdulai's work in Sierra Leone. **DO NOT** put any household items, pillows, electronics, toy or books in the shed!

FOOD PANTRY: Our food pantry helps address emergency food insecurity issues in our church or community. It needs to be restocked after our Easter distribution. Please put donations in the barrel in the glass vestibule during church office hours, or contact Kathy Reandeau for a pick-up. Please contact me if you know of anyone in need of food.

NY/HELP HONDURAS: A trip to Honduras is being planned the second week of August for possibly eight days. They will work on several projects while there: latrine, stoves, etc. Speaking Spanish is not required, though it is helpful. The people of La Laguna are so appreciative of these visits and are grateful for God's presence, aside from any projects that are completed. For information, contact Ginger Comstock [gkcomstock@gmail.com], David Makepeace [dmake8@yahoo.com], or Judy Toner [jactoner45@twcny.rr.com]. Donations gratefully accepted at: NY/HELP, c/o Arcade UCC, PO Box 95, Arcade NY 14009. Make checks payable to NY/HELP.

Thank you!



Offering Date
March 10, 2024

~Kathy Reandeau

You might have noticed some different envelopes and flyers on the welcome table when you walked in on March 10. There was a special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing®. This Lenten Offering is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ, and it supports international disaster, refugee, and development ministries.

I think there was a little confusion at the Annual Meeting about our local mission activities and our support of mission programs throughout the UCC. Our church's benevolence and mission funds go to groups we support such as Plymouth Crossroads, Sierra Leone, Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center, and other local ministries. In addition, we are also asked to participate with other churches in support of special offerings including One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, and The Christmas Fund. Today I'm just going to take a little time to talk about OGHS.

One Great Hour of Sharing involves St. Peter's and the UCC in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, we can be part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS we engage in development programs including healthcare, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing, and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recovery networks, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put us in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment, and recovery of the most vulnerable. We help meet immediate needs and address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

This year's theme is "It's Time to Share the Light." Like the old song, "This Little Light of Mine," it asks us not to hide our light under a bushel, but to share the goodness of God in all the world. When we participate in OGHS, we scatter blessings to places that desperately need them, and offer hope to people who have felt hopeless. This mission supports life-giving recovery efforts when disasters strike, empowers others in their effort to build sustainable futures, and plants seeds of peace.

The flyer highlights the story of Don Pedro Antonio Maldonado, who lives in Honduras with his family.

Despite circumstances that forced them to consider leaving their home country, they received funding through OGHS which allowed them to participate in a food security program which provided chickens, a piglet, sheep, and a cow, as well as education and training. Seems so simple, but what a difference these items made in this family's life. Don Pedro now shares his knowledge with others in his community, and credits all of his success to God.

Contributions to OGHS make stories like this possible for so many other families. With your help, we can let the light of St. Peter's shine throughout the world!



GUEST SPEAKER NEWS

St. Peter's was happy to host Andrea Walh, Development Manager for Kevin Guest House, as a speaker during our 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, April 14. Located on Ellicott Street in Buffalo, Kevin Guest House (www.kevinguesthouse.com) opened in July 1972 as the first independent healthcare hospitality house in America. Its mission is to provide a comfortable and supportive home away from home for those undergoing medical treatments. Ms. Walh spoke about the history of Kevin Guest House, related stories about some of the patients and families it has served, including its transplant recovery apartments, and outlined ways to help by preparing a dinner, creating a fundraiser, or organizing a group volunteer day. Thank you Andrea, and may God bless your work at Kevin Guest House.



May 12

GOOD SHEPHERD VISIT

What a joy it was to join with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Good Shepherd Community of Faith for our March 17 worship service! We gathered for prayer, song, and fellowship. Deacon Mark Turner shared the Call to Worship and prayer, Rev. Tanya Spenser read our Scripture lessons for the day, and Pastor Paula provided the sermon. It was wonderful to have so many people gathered together to praise the Lord!



SPRING CLEAN UP DAY

May 11 at 9:00 am

Help is needed for our annual Spring Clean Up Day on Saturday, May 11 at 9:00 am. We need many hands for Spring Clean Up Day to help spruce up our church home and make it welcoming for everyone. We will be cleaning both inside and outside the building. Please bring outside tools and gloves if you have them. We will provide buckets, Windex, etc. for inside cleaning.

Hope to see you there! Contact Christel Kasprzak with any questions. (rain date is May 18)



EARTH DAY APRIL 2024

Earth Day, which is celebrated worldwide on April 22nd, started in the United States in 1970 and is now celebrated in 193 countries. As Christians we are called to be righteous stewards of our planet. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for God founded it on the seas and established it on the waters." The theme for this year, **Planet vs. Plastics**, focuses on increasing awareness of the health risk of plastics and calls for phasing out all single use plastics. The United Church of Christ has designated April 21 as Earth Sunday. Creation Justice Ministries created Earth Sunday resources at <https://www.ucc.org/four-things-your-church-can-do-to-celebrate-earth/> to help congregations think about the ways that plastics impact our lives and God's creation. You can listen to a recording of their webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wAtXNpkFcU> and the song "Fall in Love with the Earth" by John & Alyssa Creasy, Ken Medema, Andra Moran, Bryan Sirchio, and Beverly VanderMolen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRrh-9_3AqU&list=PL66hQvP-gSzsolweLmyT8ySeFYvgOyrPF&index=4.



June 16

On **Palm Sunday** we celebrated Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with palms, music, and the word of God! Prelude music was "He Never Said A Mumbalin' Word," the sermon topic was "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna," and a special anthem featured a flute and piano duet of "Were You There?"



Sanctuary billboard by Karen Buranich



Display case by Christel Kasprzak



BAPTISM CELEBRATION

Let the little children come unto me! Sunday, April 7 we celebrated the beautiful baptism of our littlest angel, Tessa. God's blessings on you baby girl, and your family as you grow in Christ's love!



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

MAY	15	Dennis Fiegl
	27	Brian Welsh
JUNE	3	Robert Rodgers
	7	Sarah Vail
	8	Lori Cheatom
	12	Daniel Mikula
		Rev. Paula Gustafson
	16	Patty Hastreiter
	17	Carol Kaczynski
	21	Ken Kaczynski

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

MAY	1	Brian & Diane Welsh
		Robert & Paula Rodgers
	5	Milton & Elenore Keim
JUNE	5	Lori & Lorenzo Cheatom
		Ed & Marge Thomson
	27	Dennis & Sandy Fiegl
	29	Jeff & Susan Mikula

Join us every Sunday at 10:00 am
for in-person worship service.
All are welcome.



MEMORIAL DAY CANDLE CROSS SERVICE

May 26 at 10:00 am

Donation forms for the Memorial Day Candle Cross Service are available in the sanctuary. **Please return your completed form to the Church Office by Sunday, May 19.** A memorial list will be read at the service as the candles are being lit.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

May 26 at 10:00 am

Please arrive early. Members of the West Seneca Joint Veterans Committee will be attending this special service which will include a special processional before 10am. Special music will pay tribute to each branch of the military. There will be a potluck luncheon following the service in our Fellowship Hall. (see sign-up sheet)



Game Night is Back!!



Looking for something fun to do on a Friday night? Once a month we get together to share a night of friendly fun and games. Grab your family and friends, then come join us for **GAME NIGHT!** The fun begins at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. **All are welcome!**

Bring your favorite games, snacks, & beverages to share.

May 17 | June 21



FOOD & WINE PAIRING

Our Food & Wine Pairing fundraiser at Bravo Cafe & Catering on April 21 was a blast! 60 guests enjoyed a four-course dinner with four excellent wines. What an evening of fellowship and fun! Thank you Bravo. We look forward to our next night with you.

