



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Ashtabula, Ohio

The St. Peter's EPISTLE

May-June 2011

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Ashtabula, Ohio

Recently I received this article in a newsletter and it made me think. Since this is the May-June issue, I want to share it with you. I believe it is most appropriate for both of these months as well as July. This is something that too many of us seem to have forgotten. The article is entitled, **“Hello, Remember Me.”**

“Hello, remember me, I’m your Flag. Some folks call me Old Glory, others call me the Stars and Stripes, The Ensign or just the Flag. But, whatever they call me, I am your Flag and as I proudly state, the Flag of the United States of America. Something has been bothering me and I was wondering if I might talk it over with you. It’s about you and me.

I remember some time ago, I think it was Memorial Day or was it the Fourth of July when people lined up on both sides of the street to watch a parade. When your Father saw me coming along waving in the breeze, he took his hat off and held it against his left shoulder, his hand was directly over his heart, remember. And you, I remember you standing there straight as a soldier. You didn’t have a hat on but you gave the correct salute. They taught you in school to place your hand over your heart. Remember your little sister, not to be out done, she was saluting the same as you. I was proud, very proud as I came down that street. Oh yes, there were some servicemen there, standing at attention giving the military salute. Ladies as well as men, civilians as well as military paid me respect—reverence. Now, if I should be a bit conceited, well, I have a right too. I represent the finest country in the world, the United States of America. More than one aggressive nation has tried to haul me down only to feel the fury of this freedom loving country. Many of you had to go oversees to defend me. A lot more blood has been shed since those patriotic parades of long ago and I have had a few stars added since you were a boy, but I’m still the same old

Flag. Dad is gone now and the home town has a new look. The last time I came down your street, I noticed that some of the old landmarks had given way to a number of new buildings and homes. Yes, sir, the old town sure has changed. I guess I have too, because I don't feel as proud as I did back then. I see youngsters running and shouting through the streets. College boys and girls disrupting our campuses, people selling hot dogs and beer while our National Anthem is being played. Everything from apathy to riots.

They don't seem to know or care who I am. Not long ago, I saw a man take his hat off when I came by, he looked around—didn't see anybody else with theirs off, so he quietly and quickly put his back on. Now, when I come down your street, you just stand there with your hands in your pockets—occasionally you give me a small glance and then look away and when I think of all the places I've been, Normandy, Guadalcanal, Iowa Jima, Battle of the Bulge, Korea and Viet-nam, I wonder what has happened. I'm still the same old Flag. How can I be expected to fly high and proud from buildings and homes when within them, there is no thought, love or respect for me. Whatever happened to patriotism, your patriotism? Have you forgotten what I stand for? Have you forgotten all the battlefields where the men fought and died to keep this nation free? When you salute me, you salute them. Take a look at the Memorial Honor roll sometime. Look at the names of those who never came back, some of them were friends and relatives of yours, maybe even went to school with you. That's what you're saluting—not me.

Well, it won't be long before I come down your street again, so when you see me, stand straight and place your hand over your heart, do this because I represent you. You'll see me wave back, my salute to you. God Bless Our Flag and Country.”

Karen Bertholf

****Mother's Day – May 8th****

As this newsletter was being printed, Carol Wardell and Carol Niemi were busy making last minute plans for the Mother/Daughter Banquet (centerpieces and gifts) on May 5th. The head count as of May 1st was 105! Roger & Rick Balog prepared food for 100+. I am sure everyone had a lot of fun and enjoyed a delicious meal.

Marguerite

Seymour

MOTHER / DAUGHTER BANQUET



Mom

*"Happy Mother's Day" means more
Than have a happy day.
Within those words lie lots of things
We never get to say.*

*It means I love you first of all,
Then thanks for all you do.
It means you mean a lot to me,
And that I honor you.*

*But most of all, I guess it means
That I am thinking of
Your happiness on this, your day,
With pleasure and with love.*

COFFEE HOUR

Good News! We are not discontinuing coffee hour for the summer. It was brought to our attention at a recent meeting that many people were disappointed to hear that coffee hour was not going to be held during the summer. For that reason, we will have coffee hour after the 10 a.m. Sunday Service. Please sign-up to bring goodies. Any questions, please talk with Ernestine.

OPEN BAPTISM

Were you here at Easter? Did you know that the church was packed? So packed that we had a few of our most faithful members sitting in the balcony and guests who began to fill the side chapel? Easter is always a mountain top experience for the church. Resurrection always is! New life is what Easter is all about, not eggs and chocolate.

This Easter something else special happened. We opened our doors to those outside our church in a way that “connected.” We discovered that meeting a spiritual need has a spiritual benefit. And you might ask . . . what is a spiritual need? The one we experience is new life at Baptism. All Christians have experienced this joy of becoming a part of God’s family and an inheritor of the promises of God as a result of our baptism into the life of Jesus.

But the result in our small community was amazing. We had 8 people baptized, one adult and several children. A few people came from other churches. They longed to have children baptized. One family saw how we passed the peace. (You know, don’t you, that we go a bit overboard on the peace?) When the grandfather was told about this, he smiled and said that is how it should be. For churches he had attended only gave lip service to such an expression of love and good will. Others have said that they want to start attending St. Peter’s.

Such expressions are often said in the joy of the moment. It’s the work of the church (it’s our work) in making their hopes on the day of joy grow into the new possibility of faith realized in their work-a-day world. And that is what we have decided to do and are now doing.

This will take more than a priest and vestry. It will take you. Here’s how. We have a list available. Call one person on the list and invite them to your home for dinner. Say "I saw that a family member was baptized recently, and I want to welcome you personally into the family of God." If you are an organizer of a ministry in the church delegate this responsibility, but call one of these people (or all of them) to the next function such as a dinner, Bible Study, concert, or a softball game.

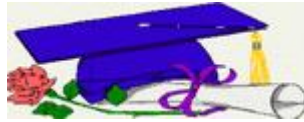
At Pentecost we are again inviting people to begin their new life in Christ here at St. Peter’s. We, of all people, know that it is in losing our life for Jesus and His gospel that we will find our life. We are experiencing that life regularly. Now it’s our turn to begin to invite people into that life. So here is perhaps a new step for some. Starting today, begin to pray. Pray that if someone in the next five weeks or someone they know is not baptized, you will invite them to St. Peter’s for Pentecost (June 12th). If someone even says the word “baptism,” not a common secular word, you will tell them about this last Easter and let them know that those that they know may be baptized, for on this day, like other days, our doors are open. Father David+

THE WINDOW AT THE BAPTISTERY

But thanks to many, the window has been removed and is now being prepared to be reinstalled correctly. Those who chose this window so many years ago had the right picture in mind when it comes to what we are just now doing in the church. In our generation, we are following the dreams of the people who gave this window in inviting people into God's Kingdom and offering a fresh start.

If the window is reinstalled before the visit of the Rev. Alan James on May 22nd (see below), we will ask him to help re-dedicate this window that it might be both a window of beauty but also an icon which leads us into ministry.

Father David+



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATE

*Congratulations on your graduation,
Opening a door not easily reached!
Now go through it: on the other side
Great mountains become hills, and then just fields
Rolling eastward towards a rising sun.
All now is success and celebration,
The music of deeds done and barriers breached.
Underneath, uncertainties still glide
Lean and hungry as the sweet day yields,
And golden moments through your fingers run.
The rock on which you stand is your creation,
Illustrating what your teachers preached
Of learning and the provenance of pride.
Nor need you fear the wind, as knowledge shields
Such as earn it from what storms may come.*

Years ago, when the new church was built (it was in the '60's), the stained glass window near the baptismal font was installed **backwards**! None of us can believe that at the time someone didn't insist that the window wasn't reinstalled correctly. Simply, it wasn't. The window is of a woman at well with Jesus (see John 4:1-42). She was an outsider. She was from the wrong side of the tracks. She had been married five times. She had been divorced five times. Oh, and she had just again moved in with someone new. Doesn't this woman share anything in common with someone you know? I know a lot of people with broken dreams and broken relationships. Don't you?

BISHOP'S VISIT

Bishop Williams, in his visit to St. Peter's, welcomed two people into the Episcopal Church (Damon Butler and Judy Stanisa). Bishop Williams also was able to spend time with many of the vestry and their spouses discussing our church's health, accomplishments and areas for needed growth. You may be surprised to know that our bishop's visit was not a "performance review" but rather a friend's visit to a part of his family.

Even though each visit with our bishop may be brief, it is an opportunity for us to welcome our church leaders into the church for which they are responsible. I want to thank you for making a special effort to be with him this year.

This year, on May 14th, David Kozak will drive to Trinity Cathedral and reaffirm his Baptismal Vows before our Bishop. David has been planning on this for some time, but due to his father's death was not able to participate in the group with Judy and Damon.

ANOTHER VISIT FROM THE DIOCESE

On May 22nd, the Rev. Alan James will be with us. Before I came, it was Alan James who visited St. Peter's to help us continue in ministry following Mother Barbara's departure. (I know that many miss Barbara and we continue to pray for her and her family.) Again Alan will be with us to discover who it is that we are becoming as a congregation in the Diocese. So much has happened since his last visit over three years ago, that it is good for him to be here and hear from us. It is often in telling the story of our journey that we come to discover for ourselves what God is doing in our midst.

So when he comes and spends time with us, please take the time and speak with him. Tell him what it's like being here at St. Peter's. Tell him from your perspective what is happening. Remember, no congregation is perfect. He doesn't expect that, so be honest.

WEDDINGS



I am delighted to announce that we have several weddings planned at St. Peter's for this year and we have already scheduled one for next year. If you have someone who desires to be married, you should let them know that we are a welcoming congregation and would enjoy helping them make their wedding day special.

But more than that, we work hard at making marriage work. That means that we ask couples to engage in pre-marital conversations where we discuss the topics of our Marriage Covenant, Life Patterns, Relationships, Communications, Conflict, and Cash Management. Such discussions help couples plan not for the day of their wedding but for their marriage. Oh, and yes we do talk about the day of the wedding.

Requirements to be married in the church are rather simple. 1) Engage in the discussions as mentioned above. 2) Be a part of an active church. If you are in town, come to St. Peter's. If you are out of town, find a church and start attending. 3) Grow in your faith. We offer several opportunities at St. Peter's for such growth.

David+

Father

BLANKET SUNDAY WILL BE MAY 15TH

Blanket Sunday donations provides disaster survivors with blankets, food, shelter and safe water--and later with tools, training and other resources for long term recovery. This ministry also brings help and hope to people in need the world over. We empower our congregation to be a true neighbor to those in need. PLEASE BE GENEROUS.

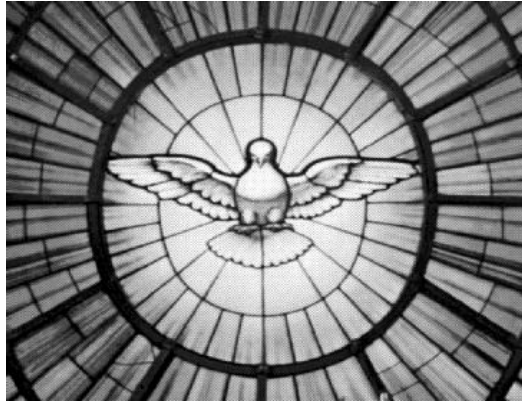
GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH, A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.

Psalm 46:1 NRSV



May 30th

PENTECOST



The art work of the dove and flame comes from St. Peter's high altar in Rome.

Pentecost is one of the major festivals in both Hebrew and Christian circles and takes place seven weeks following Passover / Easter. All within travel distance of Jerusalem were required to be at this feast and at the time following the Resurrection of Jesus, the streets were packed. What makes this day so special for us is what happened and continues to happen in people's lives.

On the day of Pentecost, God's Spirit began to equip people to live a life that was not based upon rules and regulations, guilt and shame, but a life where we desired to choose the right, and refuse the wrong, a life where death became filled with hope, and a life where the eternal choose to live within the created. That day was so remarkable that the world's people have not been the same since that day.

It's a small wonder that on this day we ask you to prepare to wear something with the color "red." Our youth are planning to give you something special on that day (we hope this happens). It's also a day when we baptize those who seek life in Christ Jesus.

So count on something new and fresh on this day (June 12th) and make sure you come to be part of this year's celebration.

David+

Father

VOLUNTEERS

The Vestry has decided to spend less this year. (Aren't you glad?) We are asking you to volunteer in several areas. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church, also posted on the Parish Hall bulletin board and bulletin board across from the church office. If your ministry is to keep your church home clean, would you please consider helping us? Thank you for helping to make St. Peter's beautiful this year.

Father David+



BIBLE STUDY

This Easter Season we are looking and reflecting on the third person of the Trinity, Holy Spirit. In our first gathering, we discussed “Who is the Holy Spirit?”. We will continue with topics such as “What does the Holy Spirit do?” and “How is a person filled with the Holy Spirit?” We will continue with each person taking time to discover their own spiritual gifts along with real life application.

There is an interesting phenomenon concerning the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to us. When used, they grow, and produce fruit. When unused, they remain dormant. When ignored or are considered needless or poppycock, they hurt the giver of gifts.

As you know the gifts are given at baptism. It’s like a hot water heater. At baptism the pilot light is lit. But no hot water heater produces water for use unless the heat is turned up, wha-whoom. It’s our privilege for God to use us, and it is our choice and responsibility to allow our “spiritual gas valve” to be fully turned to “on” so God’s spirit might fill us, guide us, and then use us in His mission in the world.

Father David+

CELEBRATE TO CELEBRATE AT ST. PETER’S

On Thursday, May 19th at 4:00 p.m., *Great Music without Barriers* AND our church family will be hosting parents and children of the CELEBRATE program for an end of the year dinner. These are the children who often come to our church for a hands-on, up close and personal concert on the Monday following a concert day. Funding for the children’s portion of the meal will come from the Jubilee grant from our National Church. St. Peter’s will provide funding to feed the parents of the children. Parishioners will be asked to help set up, serve, and provide some desserts for this meal with our neighbors.

Roger Smith

THREE TENORS? NO! FIVE FRIENDS? YES!

On Sunday, May 15th, Five Friends from the Cleveland Orchestra will be playing in concert in our sanctuary. This is a part of the *Great Music without Barriers* concert series at St. Peter’s. This musical treat will be given in memory of our friend *Zelda Altman*, a member of the Fine Arts Committee and someone who shared her culinary talents with our parish family quite often. Local pianist Dr. Timothy Kalil will join the Five Friends in a portion of the concert. A

reception will follow in the Guild Room for the artists and guests. Check out our website for pictures more information.

Roger Smith

THE BISHOP'S ROUND TABLE

Once yearly those involved in Diocese ministries are invited to the cathedral to talk about what is happening with those ministries, and to offer suggestions for getting others involved, or expanding those ministries, or just to share what's happening at our home parishes. Representing St. Peter's, I was able to attend this year's April conclave and share the needs of our area, and to offer our gratitude for the assistance that has been given to missions in our area. The assistance for After School Discovery, Beatitude House and Great Music without Barriers comes from Episcopal Community Services which receives its funding through the Bishop's Annual Appeal. (HINT!) Thank you for continuing to support this commission on which I was elected to serve.

Roger Smith

CAMP COUNSELORS ARE COMING!

Thanks to Sheldon Calvary Camp, St. Peter's will be working with camp counselors on July 6th and 7th. They have offered their services to our church on those days. Vestry has already talked about how they would like to see the counselors work with people in our area. Tim Green, St. Peter parishioner and Director of the camp, will talk with Vestry during May to finalize suggestions and plans. Please keep these vibrant young people in your prayers.

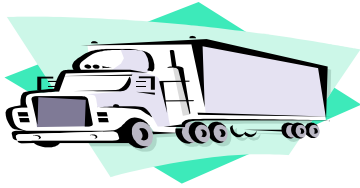
The last Sunday for the Choir, for Breakfast, and for Christian Education classes will be May 22nd.

These ministries will resume on September 11th.

Thank you to everyone for a good year.



Summer begins June 21st



AN ANGEL DRIVES A SEMI

Many telephone calls are received at St. Peter's but none like the one received on the 13th of April! A truck driver, from Jacksonville, Florida, had delivered his last order of plants to Wal-Mart and had plants left on his truck; he was going back home. He just happened to pull up our telephone number on his GPS and he called and asked if we would take the plants he had left. When I asked what kind of plants, he told me 100 Boston Ferns! *Wow - 100 Boston Ferns!!!!* Don Loose & I recruited six men to help unloaded the plants from the semi into Parish Hall. *What a blessing!* Then Norma and Jim Carlson stopped by forty-five minutes later and helped take the wrappings off of the pots and arrange them all over the church and Parish Hall, and anywhere one would fit. *Another blessing!* Then, lo and behold, Victoria Randazzo and Carol Wardell offered to help water all the plants. *Another blessing!* Many who attended Palm Sunday Services took home a fern. Don Loose offered to deliver a fern to those unable to get to church. We all just spread our blessings to others.

Marguerite Seymour



LUNCH IN SOUTH PARK—AND MAYBE IN ST. PETER'S PARISH HALL

Once again, after a hiatus of five or so years, the Children Services Lunch program will be using South Park as one of its sites to offer lunch to anyone less than 18 years of age. The program annually serves about 45,000 meals to youngsters in our county during the summer months. The program this year will begin on June 13th and run through August 12th. On days when weather conditions dictate, the children will come into Parish Hall to enjoy their meal. After School Discovery, which is a part of our ministry at St. Peter's, will be doing some activities with those children during the summer and will occasionally be using our church. Please keep the children and those who serve them in your prayers.

Roger Smith

REBUILD OUR CHURCH IN HAITI

Many thanks to all who donated toward rebuilding the Episcopal Church in Haiti. The earthquake in February of 2010 was devastating to the people of Haiti. Rebuilding the church is essential to the very fiber of Haitian society. The Episcopal Church in Haiti is a beacon of hope

in a society fraught with poverty and despair. Our parish collection during Lent totaled \$330, which was forwarded to the National Church. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Martha Shippy, Chair

THE SEEKER'S

It's our last gathering before a summer break. We're finishing the book Same Kind of Different as Me by Ron Hall and Denver Moore. We've met the characters and are finding out how much they have in common even though one is homeless and the other a millionaire. **Come join the discussion, the third Monday in May (16th) 4:00-5:30 p.m.** See how they set aside their own misconceptions and "see" into each other's lives. In the process, both lives are enriched. We're hoping to shed some light on the needs of our "Drop in Center" at St. Peter's.

Connie Dixon

MISSION NEWS

We've been sharing pictures and the DVD with family, friends, and social groups we belong to. We even made the news in the last issue of *Church Life*. We also have a group making uniforms for the schools of St. Agnes. We've completed shirts of all sizes, some skirts, and will be starting some pants. **Remember** when you're shopping at garage sales to look for navy or brown pants and white button up short sleeve shirts. We're also looking for donations of unused sewing machines to take to Belize. **Let us know if you'd like to be on the next mission team.** We hope to begin working together on the kitchen/dining room project, take the patterns and some sewing machines for some who have shown an interest in sewing, and, of course, continue working with the children and people there.

Connie Dixon



LET'S PLAY BALL

Ashtabula City is starting a coed church softball league. Games will be on Tuesday nights starting the end of May! We need about 20 people, 14 years & over for the team, since I know some will miss games. We will be meeting May 15th after the 10:00 a.m. service to go over everything. We will be purchasing jerseys and there will be some league fees which come out to \$15 each player (tried to keep the price low!) Life is fragile....handle with prayer! Sign up on church bulletin board or with myself. Hope to see you on the field this summer.

Danielle Balog

ST. PETER'S CHURCH FOUNDATION

The Foundation held their quarterly Board of Supervisors meeting on April 27th. We discussed our investments with Key Bank and will be making some adjustments in these to improve our income return. We are also working on making changes in the Edward Wood Scholarship Fund to make it available to more recipients. This will require applying to the Probate Court with the help of an attorney. Expenditures approved were for Sheldon Camp Calvary \$1,000.00 and Rector's Discretionary Fund \$1,000.00

Please keep St. Peter's Foundation in mind as you do your financial planning.

Don Loose, Chairman

PASTORAL CARE

In this article I'd like to answer two questions that have come up during several of my Eucharistic visits: "Are you allowed to do this?" and "Do you have to be ordained?". The answers are "Yes" and "No." The Episcopal Diocese has established a procedure for delivery of Communion by lay personnel who have been trained and licensed by the Diocese. Those of us who are Eucharistic Visitors go through a training class with Father David or Father Tom in which we are shown how to set-up the case for delivery, which Ann Balog is graciously willing to do for us. We usually do one or two "shadow" visits where Father David or Father Tom does the service, then we deliver communion with the Priest assisting us before they "sign off." After that, Father David certifies to the Diocese that we have been trained as Eucharistic Visitors and we are licensed by the Bishop to practice. As for the wafers and wine, they have been previously blessed by the Priest and are sanctified for delivery to our Communicants. If, because of your beliefs or personal preference you want one of our Priests, that is perfectly OK; don't hesitate to ask! After each visit your Visitor will fill out a Visitation Report detailing the time spent with you, and he/she may ask if there is anything you need or want from the church. I had one person request a Daily Devotional, which I was able to get for her. That and any other information will be noted on the report which we turn in to Marguerite. She forwards that to Father David or Father Tom and that way there is a record of who was visited and if there are any needs to be met. As I mentioned in the first article, if you are in need of a Visitation, or know of someone who is, whether they are at home or in the hospital or nursing home, please call the church to make arrangements.

Yours in Christ, Peter Bean



SHARE-A-HOME UPDATE

Thanks are in order to those who have contributed to Share-A-Home. Renovations were recently made to one of the rooms in preparation for a new resident. The Board of Directors thanks Larry and Marguerite Seymour for donating new carpeting for the room, and J. D. and Martha Shippy for purchasing drapes. Also, thank you to Jim Carlson for his hours and expertise in being "Mr. Fix-it". It is amazing what can be accomplished when so many people are involved in a project!

Also, many thanks to those who have so generously opened their pocketbooks and donated toward operating expenses for Share-A-Home. We continue to struggle to meet our daily expenses, so these contributions are appreciated. I have applied for a Church Home Grant through the Episcopal Community Services/Diocese of Ohio. I have also approached St. Peter's Foundation for help with necessary repairs. Over the next month or so, I will be writing several grant proposals in an attempt to receive money for capital improvements. Not only will these funds improve the Share-A-Home facility, but the neighborhood/community in general will also benefit. We are also in the process of planning a fundraising activity. Stay tuned for details.

Martha Shippy, Treasurer, Share-A-Home

PRAYER BEAD MINISTRY

To date, over 30 sets of prayer beads have been distributed to parishioners and friends of St. Peter's family. Prayer beads will continue to be available in the St. Peter's bookstore. Cost is \$20.00. Proceeds from the sale of prayer beads have been donated to Share-A-Home (\$60.00 so far). Thanks to Danielle Weiser-Cline for her creativity in helping with this ministry!

Martha Shippy

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUPS

Those who are interested in contemplative prayer, please note that we will continue to meet at 7:30 a.m. on Sundays (prior to the 8:00 a.m. service) and after the 10:00 a.m. service. Yes – it is very important that we all have a personal prayer life. But, we cannot forget the importance of the communal aspect of prayer. Whenever two or more are gathered...there is power!

God's Peace – Martha Shippy

THE AED IS COMING!



You find them in most public venues like stadiums, airports and city halls. Now, two Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) will be coming to St. Peter's. A committee of the Vestry - Rick Balog and I - has been working to secure an AED for use here. We have sought input from the Red Cross, KEN Heart Foundation, and several other places including Community Care Ambulance Network (CCAN).

The KEN Heart Foundation put me in-touch with an organization from Philadelphia that helps houses of worship obtain reduced cost AEDs. They have a ZOLL, normally a \$1995 unit, which we will be getting for \$995 thanks to a \$1,000 grant from the Living Endowment Fund and a voucher from ILSF, the group providing the AEDs. The stipulation is that we complete the training program they provide. My wife, Pam, has graciously offered to do the training from the ILSF program for their unit and the CCAN unit as all AEDs aren't the same. Anyone who wants to learn how to use the device will be taught.

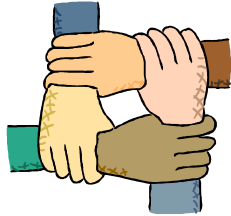
On Wednesday, April 20th, I learned that a request to Community Care Ambulance for a possible second donation of an AED had been approved. Our intent is to have one in the Church and the other at the Share-A-Home.

Peter Bean

YARNING CIRCLE

The Yarning Circle continues to meet on Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. We welcome anyone interested in joining our effort. We love visitors who just stop by to chat, too! At present, we are creating prayer shawls for the mothers who will soon be residing at Beatitude House and blankets for their children. A prayer shawl and prayer beads were recently given to Emily Hunt with all our prayers and love for her speedy recovery.

Peace and all good ~~Martha Shippy



MULTI-CULTURAL FESTIVAL

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The Ashtabula Downtown Development Association will be sponsoring a Multi-Cultural Festival on July 9, 2011. Celebrating diversity! This should be a FUN event! More details to follow.

Martha Shippy

PERSPECTIVES ON PRAYER II

In the March-April edition of *The Epistle*, we explored a bit about what prayer is. Prayer is not just talking with God, but also listening for answers to prayer! It is necessary to open our hearts and create sacred space in which to develop a relationship with God. Prayer is not a cognitive exercise, but a gift from God.

Discontent and a desire for change are catalysts in the prayer process. This is most obvious when we petition the Lord to intervene on our behalf or the behalf of another in need. However, the subtle “stirrings” and yearnings to become closer to God often disturb us out of our complacency and prod us into prayer (Roger’s favorite – “Disturb us, Lord!). The knowledge that we are on spiritual journey ascending toward God leads us into prayer for answers to discernment regarding our “call” or vocation.

We resist developing a prayer life with the excuse that we “don’t have time” -- in reality, more often than not, our resistance stems from reluctance on our part to face the truth of our inner reality that is a product of authentic prayer. Prayer is the place where we find ourselves, but also where we get rid of ourselves. Prayer is transformational. Prayer is the place we confront “our endless illusions which make us act as if we are masters of our fate” (Nouwen xix). These illusions are barriers – often the result of socialization (i.e. cultural idolatry of individuality and self-reliance, monetary wealth, etc.) – that impede our spiritual oneness with God. In prayer, we find “poverty of mind” and acknowledge that God is in control – not us! In prayer, we also discover “poverty of heart” and learn to be nonjudgmental and begin to receive

the experiences of others as gifts to us (Nouwen 78). It is only through prayer that we can become the healers that God desires us to be.

Spirituality is experiential. Our personal experiences reveal new insights into the ways we understand God's Word and how it influences our lives. Our prayer life is dependent upon how we perceive God. A God who is forbidding and threatening will be unapproachable, whereas, a God who is merciful and full of grace will be a source of solace in troubled times. Contextual listening (an awareness of another's life situation) is paramount as we act as channels of God's love in the process of healing another's wounds. We need to meet others where they are on their spiritual journey. It is a maturational process over which we have little control. It cannot be forced to happen, because it comes from within. The "prayer of my heart is not the prayer of your heart". Prayer is unique depending on one's relationship with God.

There is an inherent tension in our prayer lives, in the Word of God as found in the Scriptures (especially in the Gospel message), and in our spirituality as reflected in our lived experience. In *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen describes the tension between the utter despair of loneliness and the peaceful tranquility of solitude, between the hostility and basic mistrust and cynicism we harbor toward our fellow human beings and the nonjudgmental acceptance of others in true Christian hospitality as manifested in our recognizing Christ in others, and between the endless deceitful illusions we perceive as the reality of our lives and the true reality of our lives as reflected in prayer. On any given day, a Christian can be anywhere on the spectrum between these sets of two polarities. The continuum between the polarities is always fluid.

Inherent also in Christianity are the tenets of irony and paradox. The first shall be last and the last shall be first, the Parable of the Prodigal Son where the sloth of one son is on par with the steadfastness and loyalty of the other, the Parable of the Lost Sheep where the shepherd leaves ninety-nine of his sheep vulnerable to search for his one lost and disobedient charge – all defy logic and reason. Yet – this is the topsy-turvy world of Jesus where the unexpected becomes the reality. In my own prayer life, I have experienced the vulnerability that "leads us from false certainties to true uncertainties, from an easy support system to a risky surrender, and from the many safe 'gods' to the God whose love has no limits" (Nouwen 95). The paradox of surrender is an interesting phenomenon. It is moving from the secure known to the insecure unknown, yet, ironically, the end result is an inexplicable sense of security – the peace that passes all understanding. It is teetering on the brink of this precarious precipice we call life and embracing the uncertainty of risk in a tentative leap of faith. Prayer is an essential component in a life blessed with harmony and being in right relationship with others and our environment.

Prayer becomes LIFE!

Shalom~~Martha

Credits:

Quotations were taken from Henri Nouwen's *Reaching Out*.



SEWING GROUP

The Monday afternoon sewing group is progressing well. We have 9 (with #10 almost there) completed shirts and 8 completed skirts. So far we've had 4 people machine-sewing and 3 to 4 cutting out the patterns. We have several sets of pants and skirts already to be sewn and a new supply of shirts waiting to be cut out. The happy seamstresses are Connie, Pat, Janet, Ann, Mary Beth, Judy and Diane.

Ann Balog

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I want to thank everyone who supported me for the *Swim for Diabetes* on Saturday, April 9th. I swam 100 laps in three hours and collected \$1,400. There were 14 other swimmers in the pool with me that day, and the Ashtabula YMCA swimmers supported the Diabetes Association of Greater



Greater Cleveland's *Swim for Diabetes* with approximately \$2,500. I had a really good time and can't wait until the swim season begins again in September. The final results aren't in yet so I don't know if I won anything, but even if I don't, the overwhelming amount of support I got from my family, friends, and especially my church family was wonderful. Thank you again.

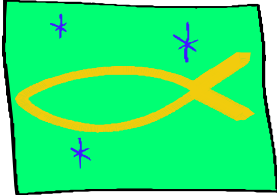
Kayla Bertholf

LAWN SALE

The Ashtabula County District Library Foundation will sponsor a Library Lawn Sale from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 4th on the grounds of the Ashtabula Public Library, 335 West 44th Street, Ashtabula, Ohio. The sale will be held rain or shine. If you are interested, an Exhibitor Rental Agreement must be completed and received along with all rental fees by May 25th. You can contact the Ashtabula Library at (440) 997-9341 for more information or to obtain an agreement.

FISH GROUPS

Would you like to join a Fish Group? And Fish will not necessarily be on the menu. The basis of Fish Groups is the story of Jesus feeding the masses with loaves and Fishes. Hebrews 10, verses 24 and 25 says, "And let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." Fish Groups will consist of approximately 6 to 10 members to:



Get to know each another better

- Have fun
- Share table fellowship
- Expand and build friendships
- Share our joys, concerns and problems with other
- Grow and spin off another small group
- Enjoy good food
- Welcome newcomers

We take turns being hosts. Meals can be held in homes or at the Church or wherever the hosts choose. We even go to a restaurant where everyone pays for themselves.

We would love to expand our membership. We are always welcome to new members. If you would like to be in a group and haven't previously signed up, please call Mary Kay or Don Loose at 964-5549.



Danielle Weiser-Cline	01
Lyndy Erickson	02
Kayla Bertholf	03
Karen Rose	07
Carolyn Huyck	09
Ed Galda	10
Ken & Carol Niemi	10
John Korb	12
Dale Schall	12
Barb Ducro	18
Carol Niemi	20
Dick Flower	21
Bill & Danielle Balog	22
John Foster Cline	22
Katrina Tatters	22
Jill Kealey	24
Sandra Skarlinsky	26
Matthew Erickson	27



June	
Larry & Marguerite Seymour	01
Larry Seymour	01
Steve & Diane Box	03
Stacy Chiles	03
Marion Hughes	05
Mary Beth Dixon	06
Larry Korland	06
Ralph Humphrey	07
David & Carolyn Huyck	09
Zach Van Allen	09
Bill Snitcher	15
Martha Shippy	16
Ryan Chiles	17
Cn. David & Lorraine Evans	19
Bill Murphy	21
Danielle Balog	22
Larry Hughes	23
Jenn Brockway	25
Marguerite Seymour	25
Carol Wardell	26
Pat Van Allen	27
Steve Box	29
Douglas Dill	30
Dale & Janet Schall	30

Happy 100th Birthday – Bernice Altonen

Happy 90th Birthday – Dick Flower



June 19th

Fathers Are Wonderful

by Helen Steiner Rice

Fathers are wonderful people
Too little understood,
And we do not sing their praises
As often as we should...

For, somehow, Father seems to be
The man who pays the bills,
While Mother binds up little hurts
And nurses all our ills...

And Father struggles daily
To live up to "his image"
As protector and provider
And "hero of the scrimmage"...

And perhaps that is the reason
We sometimes get the notion,
That Fathers are not subject
To the thing we call emotion,

But if you look inside Dad's heart,
Where no one else can see
You'll find he's sentimental
And as "soft" as he can be...

But he's so busy every day
In the grueling race of life,
He leaves the sentimental stuff
To his partner and his wife...

But Fathers are just wonderful
In a million different ways,
And they merit loving compliments
And accolades of praise,

For the only reason Dad aspires

To fortune and success
Is to make the family proud of him
And to bring them happiness...

And like Our Heavenly Father,
He's a guardian and a guide,
Someone that we can count on
To be always on our side.



FIELD OF HONOR DISPLAY

Greenlawn Memory Gardens will host their 2nd Annual Field of Honor event at 3140 E. Center Street, North Kingsville, Ohio from June 11-14, 2011.

The 2nd Annual North Kingsville Field of Honor flag display will honor currently serving men and women, veterans and first responders.

The grassy field at Greenlawn Memory Gardens will be transformed into a field of hundreds of three-foot by five-foot U.S. flags on eight-foot poles. The Flags will be in perfect rows and columns to honor all that have served in the armed forces, in law enforcement, as a fireman or other first responders.

The Field of Honor event will have an opening ceremony on Saturday, June 11th at 11:00 a.m. There will also be a flag burning ceremony on Tuesday, June 14th at 6:00 p.m.

Armed Forces Day
May 21st

