



The Bethlehem Star

August, 2011

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Rev. Harlan E. Ratmeyer, Pastor

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What’s under the microscope?

From the Pastor's Study

August, 2011



Dear Members and Friends of First Reformed Church, Bethlehem:

Last Sunday evening around 7:00 we came in from a few enormous hours in the garden, ready to relax and have supper. The weather, after the fiery heat of the previous days, was balmy and dry. We stood in wonder in the quiet of the evening; sun casting long shadows, flowers and vegetables straining to outdo each other in bringing on the harvest. Seldom do I get to savor the landscape, the sound and sight of birds living into this space. On Sunday night I was aware of our connection with the critters; all seeking, like us, to build a nest, to have a safe space. I was also aware that in the weeding and raking I had disturbed many a toad and spider, who are also living here and taking their security under a tomato plant that was only a seed eighty days ago.

Above I wrote, "I seldom get to" savor the landscape..... Phrasing it that way makes it sound as if external, outside, alien forces are programming my life, so that I seldom "get to" reflectively gaze on my surroundings. To be more honest with you, but especially myself, it should be stated as follows: I usually plan my day and responsibilities in ways that preclude a more reflective and pondering approach to life. Once I was jolted by that nearly perfect evening, I enjoyed the reflection immensely. How could a plot of land holding some pathetic little wilting plants in late May turn into a nearly impenetrable jungle by July 24. This transformation has been happening every day, but finally I took the time to see and in a less limited way, to understand.

Some of the other activities of the past weekend included attending Ellen's niece's wedding in West Chester, PA on Saturday, and then conducting a funeral upon our return to Selkirk. I was sensitive to what beauty can be found in these "hinge events". In both instances the gathered community had planned time to share stories, to reflect, to savor the day and the people for whom we gathered. In both instances there was communal "ah" as we reflected on the life of the deceased, and as we watched this lovely young couple dance and interact with their families. Great stories emerged. We were finding our place in community and it was good.

Our church family will have such an opportunity to gather soon. In 2013 we celebrate 250 years of life together. On September 25 we are inviting our Reformed Church Archivist, Russ Gasero, to be with us. He and his wife will drive up the day before and look around. He will address us on Sunday morning and following the service meet with us over a light lunch to get a better feel for the congregation. My hope is that this anniversary will not have us overworked with programs, but will provide us an opportunity to look back to again discover what is essential to our life together. Such reflective "seeing" is needed in order to plan and prepare going into the future.

Such a huge event is a little like a baptism, a wedding, a funeral. It provides a rare and important moment for us to look around, to take stock. Such an event is coming to us and for it to bless us, some essential planning needs to happen. I encourage everyone to get on board, to put a bright colored circle around September 25, 2011 and write on it "Get Ready". Between then and now, may there be many times you choose to look, to listen, to discover the extraordinary packed into each ordinary day.

Shalom
Pastor Harlan Ratmeyer

Picnic and Game Night

Please join us on the church lawn on **Wednesday, August 3rd at 6:00pm** for a Picnic and Game Night...bring your friends, family and neighbors to join us! Hotdogs and beverages will be provided...please bring a side dish or dessert to share, as well as lawn chairs, and if you'd like, your favorite outdoor games! Outdoor games for adults and children will be set up on the lawn...I always suggest a round of croquet with Pastor Harlan (it's a sure win :))! We hope to see you there!



In spite of the rumor that Pastor Ratmeyer will not be at the game night, Wednesday, August three, he will be there! Just because a grade school young woman beat him at Croquet, and badly, does not mean he will run and hide. He has been taking tutorials all winter, readying himself for this intense competition. Stand back, he has his game face on, and the skill to back it up!

In August, your ushers will be:

August 7- Ellen Ratmeyer and Carolyn Karp.

August 14- Keith and Evan Jordan.

August 21- *Will Be Announced*

August 28- *Will Be Announced*

Christian Education News

Fowler week long Urban Day takes a field trip to First Bethlehem

On June 28th at 9:40 am the school bus from First Albany's Fowler Urban Day Camp experience arrived at First Bethlehem for a day of nature and outdoor activities. The bus carried approximately 50 campers, Swims, Camp Fowler Counselors and volunteers from several churches. We began the day in the Margaret Thayer Outdoor chapel with songs, prayers and a time of remembrance for Mary Lou Riccardo. We carried a picture of Mary Lou with us to each activity and we felt her presence with us as we enjoyed an entire day of fun and games, nature and craft lessons, fellowship, running and roaming the property with an incredible passion.

Of course the day would not have been complete without a fire and s'mores. I want to thank the following volunteers from First Bethlehem for a job well done: Guy Wyche, Rebecca and Leanna Dorsey, Bob, Debbie and Lianne Weisheit, Randy Drobner, Mary and Dick Hager, Afton Serviss, Tracey, Lauren and Lindsey Waters, Bea Legere, Donna Lasher (especially for the nature in a bottle activity!), Jean Reohr, and Betty P's great-niece Si! I apologize if I missed someone!

Since this marks our 5th year of providing a field trip experience for the First Albany Fowler Urban Day Camp I must say that we are finally getting the planning, preparation and coordination down to a science. It was especially nice to step back and watch the children and adults have so much fun together enjoying this great gift of the outdoors we have in our midst.

Blessings and Peace

Debbie Ennis and Tracey Waters

Confirmation Class

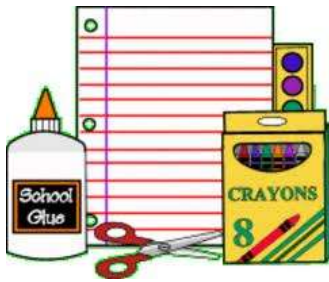
Students who are beginning eighth grade and beyond this fall are eligible to participate in this year's confirmation class. Confirmation is a time for you to explore what your faith means to you and what it means to be part of the Body of Christ, the church. During this process you have the opportunity to work with a mentor, discover new ways of being in ministry by working on service projects and explore more about mission through retreat experiences. If you are interested in participating, contact Debbie Ennis, 475-0824 or email at dera0326@yahoo.com before August 15th.

Confirmation Mentors Needed

Mentors are needed for the Confirmation Class beginning this Fall. If you enjoy working with youth, are willing to share your faith and are ready for a challenging and interesting experience in your life, consider becoming a mentor. Mentors usually work with two confirmation students and meet with them on an every other week basis. Meeting times are decided on by the mentors and students. The program begins in September and will end on Easter Sunday of 2012. If you would like to know more about being a mentor or are able to sign up now, contact Debbie Ennis at 475-0824 or email at dera0326@yahoo.com before August 15th.

Food Pantry News

The food pantry welcomes donations of fresh vegetables and fruit from your garden. The best time to drop off fresh food items is on Monday mornings (as the pantry is open on Tuesdays), however, if that time doesn't work for you to stop by, an alternative time can be arranged. Please contact Carol Broderick at 431-9133 if you have a donation, and she'll be happy to meet you at the church.



Junior Girl Scout Troop #1467 and Brownie Scout Troop #1801 (Lauren and Lindsey Waters' girl scout troops) are continuing the school supply drive through the month of August to collect school supplies to provide to families in the town of Bethlehem. The troops will be collecting the donated school supplies, which will then be distributed to two pantries that serve families in the town of Bethlehem: the Venture Churches Food Pantry and the Bethlehem Food Pantry. **School Supplies are now on sale at area stores and are very reasonably priced!** Please look for the box, decorated by Lauren and Lindsey, in fellowship hall where you can leave your donations through August! Please contact Tracey at Lteawaters@aol.com or at 858-9092 with any questions. We thank you for your assistance as we help to make sure that all children have the items they need for a successful school year this Fall!

The Food Pantry still has some boxes of **Bendaroos (500 piece sets) available**. Bendaroos are wax covered craft sticks that can be used to create all kinds of designs and creations. The age group they are primarily for would be between the ages of 3 and 10 years. The Venture Churches Food Pantry is selling the Bendaroos sets for \$5 a box (they retail on Amazon for \$10 a box, and on the Bendaroos website for \$14.95 a box). 100% of the proceeds benefit the Venture Churches Food Pantry. Please contact Tracey at Lteawaters@aol.com or Carol Broderick at cmbroderick@msn.com or at 431-9133 if you'd like to purchase one or more boxes!

If you are interested in volunteering at the pantry, we'd love your help! Please contact Tricia at 858-8889.

Check it out... We are currently members of both the **Regional Food Bank** <http://www.rfbneny.com/> and **The Food Pantries** <http://www.foodpantries.net/>

Tricia and Carol

Raphael Balls, 8/28
Troy Drobner, 8/29
Ann Everingham, 8/15
Carolyn Karp, 8/13
DeLora Miles, 8/2
Braden Pagan, 8/26
Kira Reichmann, 8/14
Deborah Stahlman, 8/1
Charles Waldron, 8/28
Edna Weisheit, 8/9

Birthdays

Jennifer Brown, 8/20
Morgan Ennis, 8/15
Sue Hoadley, 8/8
Linda Lehmann, 8/23
Edith Mitchell, 8/1
Laura Pietropaoli, 8/18
Brandon Roth, 8/4
Ronald Thayer, 8/10
Tracey Waters, 8/23

Room for All Announces National Gathering

Room for All, an organization of Reformed Church in America members and pastors working for full inclusion of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and ministry of the RCA, will hold its second national gathering, "Making Room for All 2011," to be held Thursday - Saturday, October 27-29, at Central Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. The event will feature six workshops, two inspiring and inclusive worship services, a keynote speaker, practical plenary sessions, entertainment and opportunities to receive support and information. Those who attended the conference in 2009 reported life-changing insights and new friendships. The event is underwritten by generous grants, making it possible for as many to attend as are able. For further information, go to the Room for All website, www.roomforall.com. The direct link to the online registration form is <https://www.regonline.com/makingroomforall2011>. Questions may be addressed to info@roomforall.com, or RfA Coordinator Marilyn Paarlberg (201) 364-4538.

The Parish Nurse Corner

"Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime." John 4:6 NLT

The summer sun in moderation is healthy but can become dangerous if the body gets too warm. Excessive activity, exercise, or time in the sun will increase the body's temperature which makes you sweat in an effort to release that extra heat. Sometimes this response becomes overloaded, shuts down, and causes a potentially life-threatening condition known as heat stroke or sunstroke. Your symptoms can range from clammy skin, dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, and headaches to an absence of sweating, shallow breathing, confusion, loss of consciousness, and even death.

This rise in body heat can also occur if you participate in an excessive amount of exercise without replacing the body's fluid. A loss of fluid will occur at a faster rate if your activity is outside in the heat or during times of high humidity. Because of this rapid loss, you will not be aware of your dehydrated state and you will become overheated very quickly. To combat the risk of heat stress or stroke, when exercising or working in a hot environment you must drink 2-4 glasses of water (16 -32 oz) each hour to replace the fluids lost through sweating.

To prevent heat stress or the more serious condition of heat stroke, it is important to know risk factors and tips for prevention. High risk individuals are infants, toddlers, and the elderly as they are not able to control their body's heat as well as adults. People with disabilities, chronic diseases, certain medications, and working environments in extreme heat are also more susceptible to heat illnesses. Be observant. Decrease the possibility of heat illness by dressing in cool clothing and drinking plenty of fluids without caffeine. Ask your doctor about side effects of your medication, stay in cool places when it is hot and humid, and find shade when working or playing in the heat.

(Source: Center for Disease Control www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/)



We Support: **Community Caregivers**

“Neighbors Helping Neighbors”

Community Caregivers provides services that enable individuals of all ages to maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life within their homes and communities. Whenever possible, we offer non-medical assistance to local residents so that they can avoid hospitalization or institutionalization. We also help family members and friends cope with the challenges of long-term caregiving.

We serve residents of northwest and central Albany County, New York. Specifically, we assist people living in the towns of Berne, Bethlehem, Guilderland, Knox and New Scotland.

Our clients must be ambulatory on their own or with a walker. We cannot lift clients in and out of wheelchairs, and we do not transport wheelchairs. There is no age restriction for our clients -- we will assist adults aged 18 to 118. Minor children may be served, too, as long as a parent or legal guardian also becomes a client and agrees to stay with the child for the duration of any Community Caregivers service.

Upcoming Orientation Sessions

All Community Caregivers volunteers must attend an orientation session before they can provide service to our clients.

The next volunteer orientations are scheduled for:

- **Tuesday, August 16, at 6 p.m.**
- **Thursday, August 18, at 10 a.m.**

All sessions will be held at the Community Caregivers office, and each one should last about an hour. If you plan to attend a scheduled session, you'll need to pre-register by calling our office at 456-2898, or by sending us an [email](#) containing your name, email address and telephone number.

THE FIRST REFORMED CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM
38 CHURCH ROAD
SELKIRK, NEW YORK 12158

Not for Profit
Organization
**US POSTAGE
PAID**
PERMIT NO 5
SELKIRK, NY

Your August Newsletter
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

*Don't Forget-
Picnic and Games Night,
August 3 at 6pm.
All friends and neighbors
are invited!*



A welcome spot of shade, July 22.