

The Reformer

Lawyersville and Sharon Reformed Churches

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Mission Statement: As disciples of Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to join together to worship God, to study his Word, and use our gifts to extend God's grace and love to others.

July & August 2014

What's Inside:

Pastor's Page
Church Review
Calendar of Events
Children's Fun Page
Birthdays-Anniversaries



LRC - Church Service

9:00 A.M.

**Sunday School
following worship**

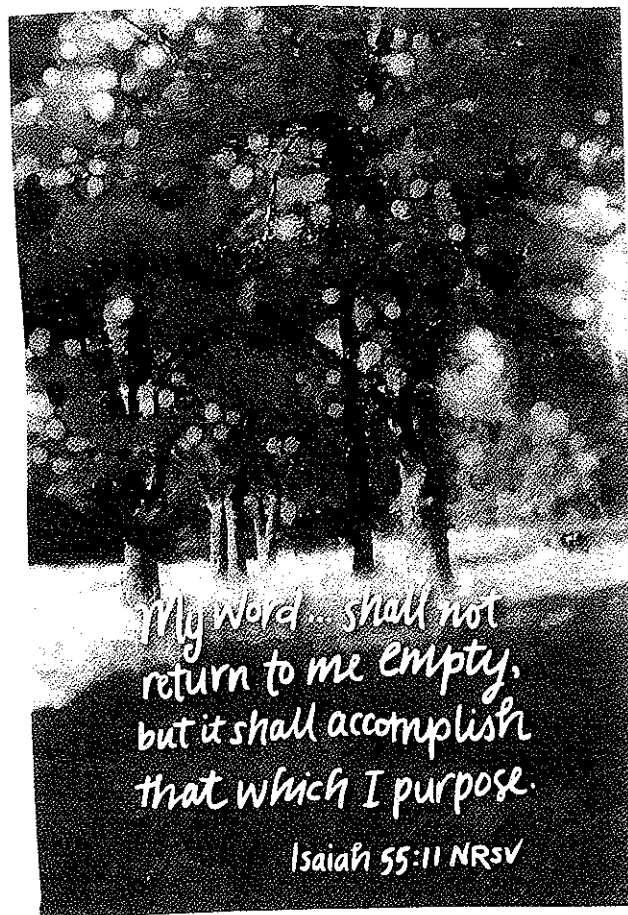
SRC - Church Service

11:00 A.M.

Sunday School

9:30 A.M.

Rev. Pacia Vamvas



Unanswered prayer?

One day a little boy asked his pastor-mom why she always bowed her head for a moment before starting to preach. The mother, delighted that her son was so aware of what went on during worship, answered, "I pray for God to help me deliver a good sermon to the people."

Alas, her delight was short-lived and fizzled at the child's response: "So why doesn't God ever answer?"

- "Prayer is not a spare wheel that you pull out when in trouble; it is a steering wheel that directs us in the right path throughout life."

pastor pacia's ponderings

"How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is it itself set on fire by hell." (James 3.5-6)

So. Here we are, once again, at a potentially unpleasant threshold. "Just the facts, ma'am" (yes, I do remember Dagnet). Here are the facts: On 25 May, during worship at Lawyersville, I fainted. I was evaluated at Cobleskill then sent to Cooperstown. Because of a neuro-muscular condition, I was admitted and placed in the Special Care Unit. Of course, about a billiondy-eight tests were done. A Neurological cause was ruled out. Good news! After having an Echocardiogram and wearing a monitor a couple weeks, cardiac was also ruled out. More good news! All of which means, I fainted and we don't know why, and may never know why. What I do know is it will cost thousands of dollars to come to that non-conclusion. Why am I going on and on about my latest medical adventure? It is not to get sympathy; this is but a momentary affliction (as is the neuro-muscular, although as an auto-immune, is incurable). It is because of the tongue that James so accurately describes. When I was diagnosed with the neuro-muscular, word got around, and got inevitably twisted in its transmission. I had a woman approach me: "I'm so sorry you have ALS." ALS! A progressive, always fatal disease. That is not my condition. Of course, it is possible it was an innocent, unconscious transmission of a report, like the old telephone game. It is also possible that the news was deliberately changed along the way.

Why do we listen to gossip? It's a way to feel a little bit better about ourselves. Why do we spread gossip? "It's just harmless fun." It is not harmless; it is not fun. Scripture is very plain on the subject:

"A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence." (Proverbs 11.13). "A gossip reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a babblers." (Proverbs 20.19).

That is the way to stop gossip in its tracks. Always, if you hear something that you know to be gossip, stop it right there. If you hear anything about this incident other than what I have just reported to you, it is gossip that needs to be squashed. Why do we gossip? So we can feel better about ourselves. Yet, the kingdom of God is not built by climbing on the backs of others. It is about lifting up, holding up, supporting one another; we are called as Christ-followers to speak love, not gossip, to one another. "That's my story and I'm sticking to it."

grace and peace, pacia

July Worship *

07.06.14 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Genesis 24.34-38,42-49,58-67 Romans 7.15-25
Psalm 45.10-17
or Song of Songs 2.8-13 Matthew 11.16-19,25-30 +
Lay Leaders LRC Kelly Sperbeck SRC Adrienne Cullen

07.13.14 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Genesis 25.19-34 Romans 8.1-11
Psalm 119.105-112 Matthew 13.1-9,18-23 +
Lay Leaders LRC Kelly Sperbeck SRC Adrienne Cullen

07.20.14 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Genesis 28.10-19 Romans 8.12-25
Psalm 139.1-2,23-24 Matthew 13.24-30,36-43 +
Lay Leaders LRC Lola Fletcher SRC Dan Fiske

07.27.14 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Genesis 29.15-28 Romans 8.26-39
Psalm 105.1-11,45 or Psalm 128 Matthew 13.31-33,44-52 +
Lay Leaders LRC Lola Fletcher SRC Dan Fiske

August Worship *

08.03.14 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Genesis 32.22-31 Romans 9.1-5
Psalm 17.1-7,15 Matthew 14.13-21 +
Lay Leaders LRC Kelly Sperbeck SRC Linda DiCicco

08.10.14 Ninth Sunday After Pentecost (green)
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Genesis 37.1-4,12-28 Romans 10.5-15
Psalm 105.1-6,16-22 Matthew 14.22-33 +
Lay Leaders Kelly Sperbeck SRC Linda DiCicco

08.17.14 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Genesis 45.1-15 Romans 11.1-2,29-32
Psalm 133 Matthew 15 (10-20), 21-28 +
Lay Leaders LRC Lisa Boss SRC

08.24.14 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Exodus 1.8 - 2.10 Romans 12.1-8
Psalm 124 Matthew 16.13-20 +
Lay Leaders LRC Lisa Boss SRC

08.31.14 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (green)
Exodus 3.1-15 Romans 12.9-21
Psalm 105.1-6,23-26,45 Matthew 16.21-28 +
Lay Leaders LRC Lisa Boss SRC

+ These are the texts pastor pacia has chosen to proclaim the Word for that Lord's Day worship. You are encouraged to read all the next week's texts for personal discipline and discipleship.
* For those who follow the Lectionary – there are two sets of Old Testament and Psalms (Semi-Continuous and Complementary) during the Season of Pentecost. Only the Complementary will be cited here.
The Messages for remainder of the Season of Pentecost will be a series on the Gospel of Matthew. Here is some introductory information.

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew's Gospel (28 chapters) is the longest of the four. Mark (the earliest recorded) has 16, Luke has 24; John 21. Matthew includes much of Mark's Gospel in his Gospel. Gospel means "good news". But, in contrast with Mark, who recorded much about what Jesus does Matthew focuses on what Jesus says.

The Gospel of Matthew addresses the Jewish community; a Jew sharing the Good News of Jesus the Messiah with other Jews.

"One of the great objectives of Matthew is to demonstrate that all the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus, and, he, therefore, must be the Messiah." 1:22: "All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet" (1:22). The term "this was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet" appears 16 times in the Gospel. Matthew would go so far as to see Jesus as the new Moses. Because encounters of God meeting Moses often took place on a mountain, Matthew presents the Sermon on the Mount. Luke has a similar account, but calls it the Sermon on the Plain.

The Gospel is understood to have five "Books", five groups of sayings; each reflects Matthew's emphasis on the Kingdom of God.

1. The Sermon on the Mount, the law of the kingdom (Chapters 5-7):
2. The duties of the leaders of the kingdom (Chapter 10);
3. The parables of the kingdom (Chapter 13);
4. Greatness and forgiveness in the kingdom (Chapter 18);
5. The Coming of the King (Chapters 24-25).

Matthew is especially interested in the Church. His is the only of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) which uses the word "church."

Matthew also stresses Jesus as King. The very first words of the Gospel, the genealogy, identify Jesus as the Son of David. The title "Son of David" is used more often than in any other of the Gospels (John included). The New Daily Study Bible William Barclay

The over-arching theme of the Gospel of Matthew is the role of Jesus as the Christ in relation to God's plan of salvation for all humanity. Toward the end of the 1st century CE [Common Era; used in place of AD], after the destruction of the temple, Judaism itself was in the process of being reshaped. During this time, Matthew redefined what it means to be God's people as those who share a common ancestry with the historic nation of Israel and also participate in the new way made available through "Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" (1:1) and the ruler of the universe (28:8).

The Gospel of Matthew was written during the last decades of the 1st century CE. It was published anonymously, so the exact identity of the author is difficult to determine. Christian tradition since the 2nd century had identified Matthew as the evangelist who wrote the Gospel.

The CEB Study Bible

The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes the unending presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, with book-end passages. In Chapter 1, the angel comes to Joseph in a dream: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," *which means, God is with us.*"

The Gospel's very last words of Jesus on the earth (28.20): "And remember – *I am with you always* to the end of the age (NRSV); to the close of the age (RSV); until the end of this present age (CEB); to the very end of the age (NIV); right up to the end of the age (Message); "even unto the end of the world (KJV)"

Bad news, Moses

God called down to Moses and said, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that I've chosen you to deliver my people from bondage. I will force Pharaoh to release my children by causing years of pestilence in Egypt. There will be plagues of locusts and frogs and inconceivable devastation upon the land. Pharaoh's armies will chase you, but don't fear; I will part the waters of the Red Sea so you can escape."

"So what's the bad news?" Moses asked.

God answered, "You'll have to prepare the environmental impact statement."

Time to make up!

After an evening filled with vigorous sibling disagreements, three children finally turned in for the night. A few hours later, a major thunderstorm woke them all up. When their father heard the children conversing upstairs, he called to see what was happening.

A small, timid voice answered, "We're all in the closet forgiving one another!"



Prayer Requests

Church

Michael Vamvas/healing
 Steve DiCicco/back procedure
 Muriel Homes/St. Johnsville Nursing Home
 Helen Brown/Palatine Nursing Home/mouth pain
 Tom Slater/increased dialysis
 Vivian Emple/Tarpon Springs Nursing Home/Hospice
 Elli Schubert/cardiac
 The People of Discernment
 Charlene Wilder/cardiac

Family/Loved Ones

Dan and Chris Parsons/pregnancy
 Joan and Mason Springstead/strokes
 Ron Tryon/in Sunnyview
 Logan Hayes/diabetes/insulin pump
 Heather Bivins/procedure
 Donald Bennett/return of cancer
 Young mother/breast cancer/surgery
 Paul Gordayer/cancer
 Bob Speidell/retinopathy
 Scott Speidell/leukemia/chemo
 Jan Liberti/home
 Dodi Chechniki/ALS
 Kate Hamlet/pregnancy complications
 Chuck Ferrell/thanksgiving for a new beginning
 Anne and Pat Donnelly/house fire
 The Clapper family/house fire

Updates on those on the prayer list are needed, so that we know how best to pray. Inactive requests will be taken off the list.

- “There are two freedoms — the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where he is free to do what he ought.”
 —Charles Kingsley
- “Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.”
 —Russell Baker
- “Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand.”
 —Mother Teresa

Community

All Teachers and students/a safe and joy-filled summer
 Grand-parents serving as guardians for their grandchildren
 All families impacted by alcoholism and/or substance abuse
 Increased heroin addiction in our county
 All families and marriages in crisis
 All children suffering from physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse
 All God’s children impacted by hunger
 All those impacted by Irene, Lee and Sandy Schoharie Area Long-Term Recovery (SALT)
 Christians facing persecution
 Concerns about the economy, unemployment and foreclosures
 All soldiers (esp. those deployed) and their families

Nation and World

Persecuted Christians
 Hatred and violence in the hearts of God’s children
 The global economy
 All unrest in God’s world
 Local, state national and world leaders
 Peacemaker groups
 Government dysfunction

*There is a group of pray-ers who receive prayer requests. If you would like to be added to either list (phone or e-mail), simply contact pastor pacia (234.9811 or PASTORPACIA@LRCANDSRC.ORG).

A 90-10 split

When the weather prediction is for a 10 percent chance of rain, do we sigh and grumble and stay indoors? Or do we go ahead and picnic, golf or hike because the chance of bad weather is so low?

When doctors say our child has a 90 percent chance of full recovery from a deadly illness, don’t we rejoice at the great prognosis? We quickly decide we can live with the slight chance of some impairment.

When a really tough exam comes back with a 90 percent grade, aren’t we glad to have done well?

When a politician runs for office, 90 percent of the vote would be considered an overwhelming mandate.

Why then, when God gives us 100 percent of our material blessings, are we so horrified at the thought of giving him 10 percent back?

Food donations

Thank you to all who contribute donations of Food for the Food Pantry, held at the Baptist Church. We know, due to the economy, that there is an increase in requests. Some who have donated in the past find themselves in need of help. Please continue to give as you are able. Thank you for participating in this ministry of care. First Sunday of each month.



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Phone: 518-234-2283
E-mail lola756@wildblue.net
Deadline: August 27th

MEMO BOARD

July

- 1 SRC Consistory
6,13,20,27 LRC Worship 9:00 A.M.; SRC Worship 11:00 A.M.
20 Special Offering (SRC)
24 Combined Consistory 6:30 P.M. @ SRC

August

- 3,10,17,24,31 LRC Worship 9:00A.M.; SRC Worship 11:00 A.M.
17 Outside Worship Services @ LRC & SRC
Usual Times
17 LRC Picnic in the park @ 1:00 P.M.
Bring a dish to pass and your own place Setting. Drinks to be furnished by Out-Reach Committee. Games and other activates to be announced later. Bring lawn chairs.
All welcome.



July

- 2 Steven DiCicco
- 5 Michelle Keaney
- 14 Karl Cooper
- 17 Bonnie Tryon
- 19 Richard Palmer
- 28 Keisten Stidle
- 29 Ruth Mereness
- 30 Erin Cullen

August

- 12 Lori Riggins
- 14 Eve Cullen
- 18 Adrienne Cullen
- 18 Lola Fletcher
- 25 Barbara Mereness
- 26 Betsy Rehl

July

- 27 Tom & Mary Lee Slater

August

- 4 Harold & Barbara Hall
- 24 Sam & Lori Riggins



Someone 'with skin on'

My 3-year-old nephew was having a hard time falling asleep at Grandma's house, so my mom lay down beside him for a while. As she started to ease out of the room, his eyes flew open. "You're safe," she reminded him. "Jesus is always with you."

"I know, Grandma," he protested, "but I want someone with skin on!"

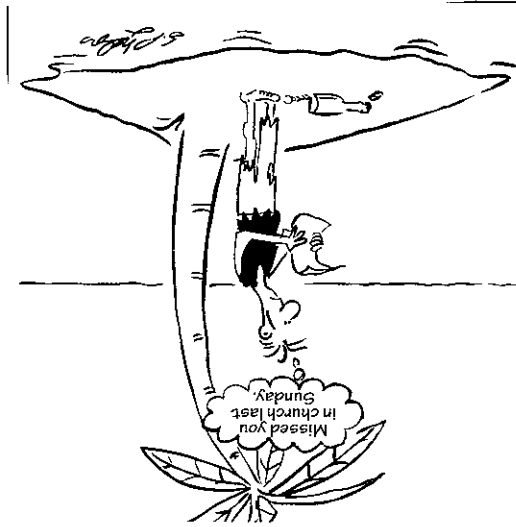
That reminded me of a quote by theologian Frederick Buechner: "Compassion is the sometimes fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin." God came to us as Jesus — someone "with skin on" — so we would know he understands what it's like to live inside our skin. Now as Jesus' body in the world, we're often called on to be someone "with skin on" to others. Indeed, we're to show them such compassion that we could just as well be wearing *their* skin.

—Heidi Mann

**DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
THE FUTURE,
GOD
IS ALREADY
THERE!**

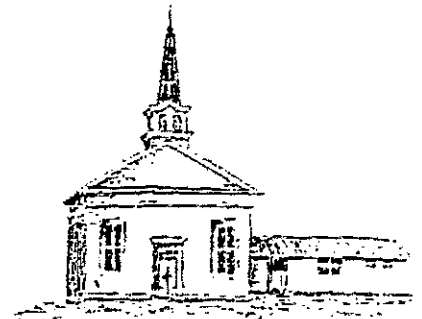


"Mr. Harris moves that we play softball. Do I hear a second?"



4957 St. Rt. 145
Cobleskill, NY 12043

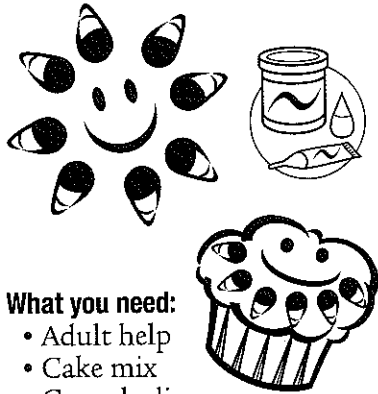
LAWYERSVILLE and SHARON REFORMED CHURCHES



Kid's Page

Happy sunshine cupcakes

Psalm 144:15 says, "Blessed [or happy] are the people whose God is the LORD." Make these bright cupcakes to remember all the ways God makes you happy.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Cake mix
- Cupcake liners
- White frosting
- Yellow food coloring
- Black frosting or tube gel
- Candy corn

What you do:

1. Make cupcakes by following directions on the box. Let them cool completely.
2. Stir yellow food coloring into white frosting, making it as yellow as the sun. Frost the cupcakes.
3. Using black frosting, make a happy face on each cupcake.
4. Around each cupcake, place candy corn with points out to resemble sun rays. Enjoy!



In Matthew 5:3-10, Jesus begins his teaching with the Beatitudes. They give us many reasons to be happy. The Greek word for blessed, *makarios*, also means happy!

Directions: Complete the Beatitudes by matching the blanks in each "Happy" phrase on the left with the bold word(s) on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. "Happy are the POOR
IN SPIRIT | hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." |
| 2. "Happy are those who _____ | pure in heart , for they will see God." |
| 3. "Happy are the _____ | peacemakers , for they will be called the children of God." |
| 4. "Happy are those who _____ | persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." |
| 5. "Happy are the _____ | poor in spirit , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." |
| 6. "Happy are the _____ | merciful , for they will be shown mercy." |
| 7. "Happy are the _____ | meeK , for they will inherit the earth." |
| 8. "Happy are those who are _____ | mourn , for they will be comforted." |

Answers: 1. poor in spirit, 2. mourn, 3. meek, 4. hunger and thirst, 5. merciful, 6. pure in heart, 7. peacemakers, 8. persecuted

"The first to apologize is the bravest. The first to forgive is the strongest. The first to forget is the happiest."

submitted by GUIDEPOSTS reader **MELANIE SAMOY-LUTZ**, of Canadensis, Pennsylvania

"If you're bored with life, if you don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things, you don't have enough goals."

LOU HOLTZ, ESPN commentator and former college and NFL football coach

"If you're busy doing what matters to you, then being busy is bliss."

EDWARD M. HALLOWELL, from *Crazy/Busy/Overstretched, Overbooked, and About to Snap!*

"Life is very interesting...in the end, some of your greatest pains become your greatest strengths."

DREW BARRYMORE, actress and mom

"Forgiveness doesn't excuse their actions. Forgiveness stops their actions from destroying your heart."

KAREN SALMANSOHN, author and motivational speaker

"Secret of adulthood: Every to-do list should include at least one item that can be crossed off within five minutes."

GRETCHEN RUBIN, author of *The Happiness Project*

"There is no better way to enjoy God's abundance than to share a meal together with people you love. From the beginning of time, there have been few things that knit us more closely together as humans than to sit down and share a meal."

VICTORIA OSTEEN, from *Sunday Dinners: Food, Family, and Faith From Our Favorite Pastors*, by Diane Cowen

"The best way to guarantee a loss is to quit."

actor **MORGAN FREEMAN**

"Friendship is God loving us through someone else."

submitted by GUIDEPOSTS reader **JESSICA DEMENNA**, of Phoenix, Arizona

"Happiness is not the absence of problems, it's the ability to deal with them."

STEVE MARABOLI, author of *Life, the Truth and Being Free*

"Sometimes when things are falling apart, they may actually be falling into place."

submitted by GUIDEPOSTS reader **DONNA CHNUPA**, of Dublin, California

"Whenever you are blue or lonely or stricken by some humiliating thing you did, the cure and the hope is in caring about other people."

DIANE SAWYER, anchor of ABC's *World News*

"Collect moments, not things."

NATALY KOGAN, chief happiness officer for the website happier.com