

# ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LIMERICK, PA

## JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

St. James United Church of Christ in Limerick, PA is called to be disciples of Christ providing a caring, supportive, welcoming and inclusive community. We seek to faithfully spread the good news of Jesus Christ through generous mission, loving fellowship and curiosity about the Bible and our faith, with the help of God.

*<sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” <sup>5</sup>And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup>And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.*

Mark 6:4-7

Dear St. James family,

In July, we are going to be talking about having confidence in ministry, and also about power, and how it can be used and misused. Notice in the passage above that Jesus experienced a failure in his hometown. They had trouble believing their hometown boy could make good like that, even though, you would think, they knew him. He grew up with them. They had to know how bright he was. Why are they so surprised? But this didn't stop Jesus. He practiced what he preached to his disciples. He shook the dust off his feet from his hometown and kept moving. He went to teach and preach in other towns, and he also sent his disciples out. He did not let his hometown crowd deter him from what God had in mind. Jesus had confidence in what God was calling him to do.

Sometimes this call could be to be a healer. We may be thinking, “Well, that’s not me. I can’t heal anyone.” That’s not true. We can all contribute to the healing of another. A kind word and a smile can go a long way. Just the other day, I was feeling down and I called on a new girlfriend and told her how I felt. And she said to me, “Beth, you don’t know how happy I am that I met you. I have been praying to make a new friend and here you are.” She really lifted my spirits, and helped me to feel better. She participated in my healing.

Sometimes what God calls us to do is a little harder. Jesus tells his hometown the truth – “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” Have you ever had to tell someone your truth? Have a difficult conversation? Call out a relative on their bad behavior? It’s really hard – many of us would rather stay silent “to keep the peace.” I feel that way sometimes. But “peace” does not mean to sit on conflict and let people behave any way they want. It means to handle conflicts in a peaceful way.

When we talk to and listen for God, and act on what we hear, we can gain confidence in what God wants for us and for the world that God so loves. Come and see.

With the peace of Christ,

Pastor Beth

## UPDATE FROM PASTOR BETH RE: PSEC

On June 7-9, each of the four PA conferences met in State College. We all had our own spring meetings, but we also spent a good amount of time together talking about the possibilities in merging our conferences together. This is a process that has been going on for two years. If you would like more information about the process, I can email it to you or get you a paper copy. I also have copies of the conference's annual report.

Our Church's Wider Mission or OCWM contributions fund the conference. These contributions come from the churches and individuals.

So going into the meeting, I'm thinking that this merger is just a cool idea maybe but I'm not sure how it's going to work. By the time the meeting was over I realized that it would not be just a cool thing to do but is an economic necessity. Here's why: our PSEC treasurer stated that OCWM contributions are projected to go down 3% across the board, with expenses going up 3%. If the conference staff stays as it is now, and these projections are correct, the conference will be bankrupt in ten years. The other conferences are in similar straits. While I don't actually expect the conference to go bankrupt, staying as we are is no longer an option. If the merger does not go through, tough decisions will have to be made.

I realize that, like many churches, St. James has cut their budget for OCWM this year. It's understandable considering how our general fund is doing. For the size of our congregation, we are in the top ten churches of our conference in terms of contributions. I am super proud of that. But without the conference, there would be no more pastor and lay training, no one to do search and call when a new pastor is needed. No one to call when a church is having inner conflicts, no one to help with Sunday Supply when the pastor is away. No way for churches to be connected beyond our association.

There will be more information forthcoming this fall about the merger in terms of town halls, with a vote among all conferences to take place at the fall meeting on November 9. If all conferences vote yes, it will then go to General Synod next summer to be voted upon. If even one conference votes no, however, there will be no merger, at least for now. I believe that God is calling us to a new thing. Remember how we talked about Isaiah taking a leap of faith and saying "Here I am, Lord. Send me."? Without having any idea what God could have in mind? This reminds me of that. If the merger goes through, there will be birth pains. However, and this is just me dreaming, maybe this merger can lead to state wide training, retreats, collections for those who need it and disaster relief efforts among other things. The possibilities in a merger could be endless. I believe that we have to take a leap of faith, into the unknown, and trust God that it's the right thing to do. Please come to me with your questions and comments, and please pray for all of our conference ministers and for this process, that we may follow as God calls us.



### Women's Fellowship 2024 Schedule

September 16	Monday Dinner Out at SpringFord Diner, 5 pm
October 22	Boscov's Day Fund Raiser
October 26	Saturday Fall Rummage Sale
November 23	Saturday Fill Stockings for Salvation Army, 10 am
December TBD	Christmas Tea

### **Friday night line dancing**

We will be hosting our next line dancing party on Friday, July 19 from 7-10 pm. DJ Jim Dawson will be our DJ and instructor. He teaches short dances with easy steps done repetitively, and focuses on beginners so if you've never tried it, come on out! Please tell your friends and neighbors as everyone is invited to the party. There will be a \$10 fee/\$5 for church members and kids ages 12-17. Under 12 free. Proceeds from the July party will benefit the "You Are Worth It" organization in Spring City.

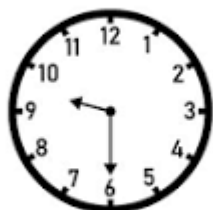


### **Summer time change**

In July and August, church will begin at 9:30 am.

### **Outdoor Services**

Sunday church services will be held outdoors in the church pavilion on July 7, July 21, August 4, and Aug 18. Please sign up to help set up for these services. Thank you.



**Potluck Dinners** will resume on September 14.

## **FOOTPRINTS**

Margaret Fishback Powers

One night I dreamed a dream.  
I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

When the last scene of my life shot before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

There was only one set of footprints.

I realized that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life.

This always bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about my dilemma.

“Lord, you told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way.

But I’m aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints.

I just don’t understand why, when I needed you the most, You left me.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then I carried you.”



Poem submitted by Charlotte Fiedler

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## **JULY BIRTHDAYS**

7 Patrick Miller  
12 Joanne Levering  
21 Kristen Focht  
24 Russell Brightbill  
25 Jay Smith  
28 Charles Grisdale  
29 Margaret Schweitzer

## **JULY ANNIVERSARIES**

31 Ken & Diane Raspen



*For our friends Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Sang Hi Crater and others who are in long term care or unable to leave their homes. We pray for comfort, peace, healing, and companionship for each of them.*

*For our friends Dan S, Priscilla M, Daran B, Barb G, Shirley, Van S, Ken M, Brian S, Cheryl, Jim S, Alison L, Jackie, Dee L, Betsy R, Ginny T, JC, Paul M, Amy D, Barb M, Christine J, Barb G, Jean S, Michelle, Paul M, Bonnie, BJ, Ric F, Linda S, John K, Tabby, Karen, Phil, Dodie S, Carol T, Kork M, Don G, and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

*For our friends Betty M, Paul M, Barbara B, Judy, Franklin R, Russell B, Lorraine R, Kevin, Shaun, Marion H, Brian, Kenny B, Mary Lou B, Sonny B, Cathy M, and others with ongoing health concerns and challenging life circumstances. May they be reassured of God's presence through the support of our congregation.*

*Prayers for all veterans that are still suffering from PTSD and all other side effects from their service in the military.*

**Lord, we come to you with praise and thanksgiving. We thank you for the healing of many and pray for all who are still struggling with medical issues. We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones and friends. Fill them with your comfort and peace. We pray for all who are being affected with wars that peace may be found. We pray that you continue to guide and walk with us through our greatest needs. Help us to spread our love to all we meet. We pray for wholeness and healing of mind, body and spirit upon us all. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.**

Please note that we will remove names on the prayer list after one month, except for homebound and hospitalized members. Let us know if you would like to add or renew a request by contacting Charlotte Fiedler by phone or email.

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### PRAYING FOR OUR FELLOW MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES


Initiated by St. James Prayer Team, each Sunday two church families are being included in the Sunday worship prayer time. You are invited to include these members and their families in your prayers throughout that week.

July 07 —Margaret Schweitzer and Donna Serina

July 14— Kristen Serina and Michael Serina

July 28— Jay & Gail Smith and Clinton Starkey

CALENDAR JULY 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 Independence Day 	5	6
7 Worship service outdoors in the pavilion 9:30 am	8	9	10	11	12	13 Men's breakfast 8:30 am
14 Worship service 9:30 am, communion	15 Pastor Beth on vacation through July 22	16	17	18	19 Line Dancing 7-10 pm	20
21 Worship service 9:30 am with Tom Niahros outdoors in the pavilion	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Worship service 9:30 am	29	30 Consistory meeting 7 pm	31			



Please **save the tabs** from your soda cans for Keira Serina. The tabs will be collected to benefit Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. A **jar** for this is on the table in the narthex.



**The Little Free Library**—We are in need of adult and children's books for our free library outside. If you have any you would like to donate they can be put in the counting room or given to Charlotte Fiedler.

- \* Volunteers are needed to read Scripture during the service, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* The church is in need of used highchairs or booster seats, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* The worship committee is seeking new members, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* You can provide or sponsor altar flowers to honor someone or an event, see Donna Serina or Beth Miller, altar guild volunteers for July.

July 2024 Newsletter

## 2024 CONSISTORY

Richard Fiedler, President  
Bob Walters, V. President  
Kristen Serina, Secretary  
Cindy Valerio  
Ken Raspen  
Jay Smith  
Susan Myers  
Laura Walters

### Officers:

Tom Mogel, Financial Sec.  
Margie Schweitzer, Historian  
Jay Smith, Treasurer

**Materials for the August Newsletter are due to the office on July 22<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.**

## CONTACT THE CHURCH

321 South Limerick Rd.  
Limerick, PA 19468  
610-489-0990  
[www.stjames-ucc.org](http://www.stjames-ucc.org)  
Rev. Beth Eustis  
[pastor@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@stjames-ucc.org)  
*Music Director/Organist:*  
*Donna Pinto*  
[music@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:music@stjames-ucc.org)  
(610) 792-1679  
*Church office hours*  
Mon. & Thurs. 1pm—4pm  
[office@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:office@stjames-ucc.org)  
“Like” us on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/stjamesucc](http://www.facebook.com/stjamesucc)

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