

Happy Birthday to our Seniors!

JULY:

Elsie Evans—July 4
 Louise Wilson—July 12
 Grace Rhoads—July 18
 Mildred Buss—July 20
 Mary McVaugh—July 30



AUGUST:

Mildred Ludwig—August 2
 Janet Haney—August 15
 Bill Wilson—August 15
 Evelyn Hoffert—August 24
 John Fehr—August 30

COMING UP IN SEPT:

Bill Haney—Sept. 14
 Ada Peters—Sept. 18
 Henry Eyrich—Sept. 22
 Betty Zellner—Sept. 25

Did we miss anyone? If you are a “Senior” Member over age 55 and wish to be included on the birthday list, please call the church office at 610-856-7242.

PARISH REGISTER:

WEDDING:

07/04/15—**Susan Reeser and Ryan Rhode**

FUNERALS:

06/27/15—**John (Jack) McEwen, 85.**
 07/06/15—**Betty Sotzin, 85.**
 07/08/15—**Bertha Rhode, 95.** Interment in Robeson Cemetery.

Support our Neighbors:

St. Benedict 59th Annual Summer Festival & Chicken BBQ & Fireworks—Saturday, August 1st

Dinners—12 noon until 7p.m. \$10.00 each
 Festival with auction, bingo, games, food, crafters, clown, Blood mobile (1-5), Music by Missbehavin (6 p.m.)

See you at the festival!



Vol. XXXXIV
 No. 7

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JULY/AUGUST 2015

The Parish Digest

From the Pastor:



“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

-2 Corinthians 5:17

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

- John F. Kennedy

“You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing in.”

- Heraclitus

You and I find ourselves living in a world that is constantly in flux, constantly changing. For many of us it can be quite the frightening experience to look around and notice how different the world is today compared to even just a few years ago. And even though, biologically speaking, we know that we too are natural creatures of change (we grow, we learn, we adapt) there remains some part of us that desires a shelter from the storm, a safe harbor, a place of continuity and security where we can cling to the ways and practices of old and be in touch with the traditions and connections of our past.

Of course the most obvious answer for many people when it comes to seeking out a place where tradition and continuity can be found is to look to faith and, in particular, to the realm of religion and (continued on page 4)



A mailbox is located outside the church office for anyone who has written information for staff, chairpersons, preschool, or other leaders.

Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor

Home: 610-875-0015 Office: 610-856-7242

Office hours: Wednesday 9-12 and 1:30-3:00; Thurs. 9-12;

Day off: Monday;

Email address: revmikeware@gmail.com

Susan J. Creed, Minister of Christian Ed. —Home 610-779-0179

Office Hours: M-TH 1:00-4:00 610-856-7242

Email address: screed@dejazzd.com

Mark Lauer, Youth Ministry Leader—Home 610-286-0800

Office Hours: TH 10:00-1:00 610-856-7242

Email address: Mark.Lauer12@Houghton.edu

Louise Wilson, Minister of Music—Phone: 610-273-3911

Email address: weeziecow2@yahoo.com

Debbie DeMarco, Parish Secretary

Home: 610-856-7386 Office: 610-856-7242

Office Hours: M-TH 9-4; Friday 9-12:00

Email address: ddemarco@dejazzd.com

Linell McCormick, Office Assistant, T & Th, 12-4

Home: 610-775-2571 Email: lmr52@aol.com

Dale Creed, Maintenance Supervisor—M-Th mornings

Robin Werner, Sexton—Phone: 610-698-0688

Email: robinbaskets@aol.com

Christine Raines, Preschool Director— Phone: 610-856-7613;

Email: preschool610@dejazzd.com

Council Officers:

Chris Gerace, President

Rex Miller, Vice President

Karen Kercher, Secretary

Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

Kay Good, Treasurer Special Funds

Lori Sifford, Financial Secretary

Other Council Members:

Craig Eppright

Joy O'Donnell

Sue Besecker

Abby Moore (youth)

Ed Haag

Julia Bond

CHURCH AT LARGE AND COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Peach Festival at Alsace Lutheran Church, 2201 Kutztown Rd., Reading—Sunday, July 19, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Entertainment by Uptown Band 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Plenty of food, games, fun and fellowship! Bring lawn chairs!

Celebrant Singers at Calvary Lutheran Church, 1009 Elizabeth Ave., Laureldale, on July 22 at 7:00 p.m.
10 singers with a live orchestra, inspiring personal testimony, ministry reports from around the world.

Summertime Organ Recital at St. Mark Episcopal Church, 1040 Chestnut Tree Road, Honey Brook, on Sunday, August 9, 4:00-5:00 p.m. featuring Jacob Leonowitz, organist. Featuring works of Bach, Mendelssohn, Diane Bish and more. No tickets needed; free will offering; reception to follow recital. Come and bring a friend!
(Jacob substituted here at Robeson several times during our organists' vacations.)

From our Mailbox:

6-4-15

From the bottom of my heart I want to thank all of you for your prayers, phone calls, cards and visits during my two month recovery. With God's blessing I'm doing well. Again thank you. By the time you read this I'll be moved into an apartment at StoneCroft located at Tel Hai. My new address is:

Alyce McEwen, StoneCroft Apt. #5408, P.O. Box 220, Honey Brook PA 19344; phone: 484-496-7294

7-5-15

Perhaps you sent a lovely card or sat quietly in a chair. Perhaps you sent a floral piece if so we saw it there. Perhaps you spoke the kindest words as any friend could say. Perhaps you were not there at all, just thought of us that day. Whatever you did to console our hearts, We thank you so much whatever the part.
-The Family of John (Jack) McEwen



RECYCLING OPPORTUNITIES:

HELP YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY:

Please bring in your used **ink cartridges** (any kind) and we will recycle them at Staples earning \$2 each for the church.

Cell phones, eyeglasses, good used clothing also continue to be collected for local ministries.

Paper Recycling Bins are located at the rear of Hoeffler Hall to accept your **newspaper, magazines, office paper, “junk” mail, and now phonebooks and cardboard (must be smashed flat)**. Please no plastic; take your paper out of the plastic bags before you throw it in the bin. Thanks for your help!

REDNER'S TAPES FUNDRAISER:

We continue to collect Redner's receipts as an ongoing fundraiser and we are waiting for our next check. Thank you Marion Kachel for coordinating this effort and handling all the paperwork. Marion would like to thank everyone who participates and remind you to always use your gas card when making a purchase at Redners. **Receipts without the gas card number printed on them are invalid and will not be accepted by the store.** Please continue to save your Redner's receipts and bring them to the church at your convenience. Boxes are located in the narthex and foyer. Again we remind you to make sure you use your Redner's gas card when you make your purchase and then bring in your receipt—it's that easy! And you'll be helping your church.

(If you shop at Redners but don't have a gas card, just ask for one. It's free!)

Seniors and shut-ins: just send your receipts with any member of the visitation team or mail to the church office. Thank you!!!

COMMUNITY NEWS:

BREAKFASTS: Geigertown Fire Company—First Sunday; Brecknock Fire Company—Second Sunday; St. Benedict R.C.Church—Third Sunday; Joanna Furnace—Third Saturday, 7-11 a.m.

JULY/AUGUST SERVICES



JULY 5 & 12—9:00 **Holy Communion**

JULY 19—9:00 **Worship; Pastor Paul Hoh, guest pastor**

JULY 26—9:00 **Praise Service with Laudate**; Joyful Noise offering for Compassion Child

AUGUST 1—**Saturday Communion Service** at 5:30 p.m.

AUGUST 2—9:00 **Holy Communion**; Baptisms and Reception of New Members

AUGUST 9—9:00 **Holy Communion**

AUGUST 16—9:00 **Worship**

AUGUST 23—9:00 **Praise Service with Laudate**; Joyful Noise offering for our Quilters

AUGUST 30—9:00 **Worship**

UPCOMING EVENTS: Please mark your calendar!

July 14-19—Pastor Michael, Mark Lauer, Lana Gerace and youth attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, Michigan
July 23—Plowshares and interested adults volunteer at Animal Rescue League, 6-7:30 p.m.

August 8—Plowville Community Day—see article on page 6

August 13—Plowshares and interested adults volunteer at Shady Hollow Assisted Riding Stable, 6-7:30

August 19—Meeting and Potluck Dinner with members of St. Benedict R.C.C. with basket assembly—more information to follow

September 6—9:00 Last summer service; Picnic at the pavilion!

the church. After all, how many other institutions in our society have been around for almost two thousand years and yet still maintain a practice consistent with those of ancient days???

Even so, the Church is not entirely exempt from change. Indeed one can certainly look to the ways in which our expression and understanding of the Christian faith has grown and matured over the centuries. In this, we can experience how like each of us, the Church too is a living, breathing, and growing entity; and it is a place that remains relevant because our practices are ever able to adapt to the needs of the times. Hopefully this same reality is likewise played out in our own personal lives of faith as we daily examine who we are as followers of Christ; certainly this has potential for many life changing outcomes.

Personally, I take daily delight in the sweet irony that the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church that so many outsiders would point to and call archaic, stuck in the past, or irrelevant to the needs of today; that same Church that we Christians cling to as a community of faith and seek sanctuary within, is itself a constant facilitator of change, an institution that has and continues to effect significant change in the world.

The truth is that you and I as followers of Christ, because our absolute and total security is in the Lord; you and I have no need to fear change, indeed **change is part of our tradition**, as Christians and perhaps especially as Lutherans (they didn't call it the GREAT REFORMATION for nothing). Change is always with us and within us, it is part of who we are; it's in our blood both figuratively and literally! It is what God does to us and through us!

To that end God invites us to rejoice in change, to face it with anticipation instead of dread, and to face it with a concern for the needs of others; avoiding the temptation to only look to the needs and wants of ourselves. Therefore, in the midst of all the changes that happen in life, let us endeavor to



Visitation Team bringing communion to shut-ins

Members of our Visitation Team have now been trained to bring Holy Communion to our shut-ins. It is our hope to visit with and bring Holy Communion to each shut-in and homebound member of Robeson up to 6 times a year. If you would like a visit, and have not yet been visited by a member of our team, please feel free to contact Pastor Michael or call the church office 610-856-7242.)

VOLUNTEERS are NEEDED as DRIVERS to provide transportation to and from church for individuals who are currently unable to drive. This is especially important for the 5:30 Saturday evening communion service the first Saturday of each month. Please contact the church office at 610-856-7242 if you are willing to drive or if you would like a ride.

VOLUNTEERS TO MAKE MEALS: If you would be willing to make a meal or even to buy a meal for a family who is struggling due to health issues please call the church office (610-856-7242) or email Debbie at ddemarco@dejazzd.com and we will put you on the schedule. This can make such a big difference to someone who is sick and to their caregivers who are already doing so much.



MINISTRIES AVAILABLE TO OUR SENIORS, SHUT-INS, SICK, ETC.:

CD Ministry—CD's of the weekly services are being mailed out to all those senior, sick or and shut-in members who cannot attend church services.

Large Print Devotionals—these are the same as our small, daily devotionals but have larger print for those needing it.

Prayer Shawls—These are available for sick, hospitalized, shut-in or senior members who would like one. They are very comforting to those who have received them. Recipients do not need to be a member of Robeson so please take them for others who would like them.

Robeson Hammers—Helping members in need with minor repairs at home, mainly small projects that would make their homes more safe or comfortable.

Home Visits—Our visitation team is visiting a number of our seniors and would be more than happy to visit others if invited. If you would appreciate a visit please call the church office. If you have a need or request for any of the above ministries, please call the church office and we will be happy to help you.

The **Berks County Area Agency on Aging** is available to help you over the phone. Please call their office at 610-478-6500 and a staff member will be able to explain available services, answer questions and provide information on programs and community resources for you, family members or anyone you know who is 60 years of age and older. Please don't hesitate to give them a call.

be positive and to be good stewards of change, so that we might welcome the many new opportunities that come with change and all the while celebrate the wonder of a God who remains ever constant, loving, and faithful to us.

Your brother in Christ,
PASTOR MICHAEL

+ + +



Your help is needed and will be greatly appreciated!

On the following page is a poster for the upcoming Plowville Community Day to be held on August 8.

A committee comprised of members of the Plowville Athletic Association, the Scouts, Pre-school, and Robeson Lutheran Church have been meeting for months to plan this day of activities for our community. We are hoping to bring the community together and also raise funds to renovate Hoeffler Hall with new flooring for all to enjoy.

We are in need of vendors for our flea market. Please spread the word and have them contact Bonnie at bonnieleelauer@gmail.com. We are also collecting items for the Plowshares used household items table (no clothing please). Donations can be dropped off at the church office. We also need volunteers to help with the clean-up from 10-12. We are hoping to make our church and ballfield property look more beautiful. We are planning a battle of the bands for part of our evening entertainment so if you know of someone who would like to join this fun competition please email Kathy Milligan at Millig1@aol.com or call the church office. Volunteers will be needed throughout the day at the various stands and tables so if you have an hour or two to donate please call the church office at 610-856-7242 or email Debbie at ddemarco@dejazzd.com. Please spread the word about this event. Hope to see you there!

PLOWVILLE COMMUNITY DAY

Saturday, August 8

At Robeson Lutheran Church and
Plowville Ballfield

10-12 Clean-up—give back to the community

10-4 Flea Market—call 610-286-0800 for a space or email bonnieleelauer@gmail.com

12-4:

Healthy Living Fair

Senior Living at Market Sq.

Literacy Council

Visiting Angels

Thrivent

Weaver's Orchard

Sugarbush Nursery

Puppy Club

Shady Hollow Stables

EMS/Fire Company

More...

Demonstrations

Dancers from Remix

Geigertown Fire Company

12:00 Puppy Club

1:00 Exeter K-9

2:00 Shady Hollow Assisted Riding

3:00 Phil Witman "Critters"

3:30 Geocaching

7-11 p.m.—Free Entertainment on the Ballfield

7-9 Battle of the Bands-contact katmill71@gmail.com
(participants can be band or acoustic, vocalist, or instrumentalist)

9-11 Family Movie

Children's Area

Bounce House

Duck Pond

Tractor/train ride

Activity tables

Dunk Tank

Food

Peaches & Ice Cream

P.A.A. Snack Bar

Raffle

Gift Cards & baskets

from local

businesses

Snack Bar Open!

Men's Group

**MEN'S
BREAKFAST**



The men of Robeson Lutheran Church continue to meet for breakfast and fellowship on the second Saturday of each month at 7:30 a.m. here in our own Hoeffler Hall. This is a great opportunity to get to know your brothers in Christ and learn more about your faith through brief bible study and mutual conversation. Come and see how the men of Robeson live out their discipleship. Please contact John Lauer at johnwmlauer@gmail.com about the August breakfast since the 2nd Saturday will be the same day as Plowville Community Day.

August breakfast since the 2nd Saturday will be the same day as Plowville Community Day.

Robeson Robins Senior Group

The Robeson Robins will hold their next monthly meeting on August 18 (no meeting in July). They will be celebrating Everybody's Birthday with a picnic lunch and entertainment by the Boomadeers! Please bring a dish to share and join them in Hoeffler Hall at 12:00 noon.



Please call Billie at 610-401-8496 if you would like to join the group or for more information about the Robeson Robins.

Robeson Lutheran Preschool

has a few openings in all classes for the 2014-2015 school year: Toddler, 3's, 4's, & Pre-K

Please call the preschool office for a registration form or more information (610-856-7613), or email

Preschool610@dejazzd.com

Please check out our website at

www.robesonlutheranpreschool.org

THIS AND THAT AT ROBESON LUTHERAN:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!! We have posted volunteer sheets on the bulletin board at the office in the new foyer. If you are willing to help during any of the services please sign up on this board. There are lists for acolytes, lectors, ushers, greeters, sound technicians, nursery attendants, worship assistants, and communion servers. We appreciate and need our volunteers!

ALTAR GUILD: Altar care volunteers are still needed for 2015. If you are willing to serve on altar care for a month with at least one other volunteer please call Marion Kachel (610-856-1683) or the church office.

REMINDERS:

Committee reports are due in the church office on the first Thursday of the month for the council meeting which will be held on the 2nd Thursday.

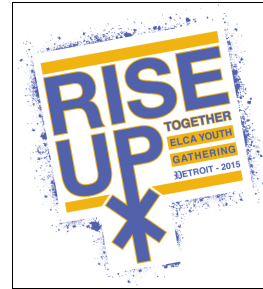
All Property concerns and requests should be brought to the attention of Dale Creed or the church office. Please do not take concerns directly to the Property Committee. Thanks for your help with this.

PARISH DIGEST DEADLINE: Articles for the September newsletter are due in the office by August 17.

IMPORTANT:

- Any group or individual sponsoring special projects, collections, etc. please contact Bill Haney (Social Ministry) for coordination purposes and especially Debbie at the church office for advertising these events and projects.
- Any committee or group that has events etc. to advertise in the area papers should please copy to Linell at lmrm52@aol.com.

THANKS to all those who have adopted our flower beds here at the church. A special thank you to Ben and Linell McCormick, John Jarmoski, and Plowshares, as well as those of you who are working “under cover.”

**YOUTH NEWS:**

Pastor Michael, Mark Lauer, Lana Gerace and seven of our senior youth are attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, MI from July 15-19. The group will leave on July 14 for five days of service, worship, and fellowship. We are so excited for our kids here at Robeson to

have this opportunity to participate with other youth in the greater body of the ELCA. We again thank the congregation here at Robeson for your support and ask you to keep the group in your prayers during their trip.

CONGRATULATIONS to our Graduates!

We are aware of the following youth who have recently graduated from area high schools. We congratulate them and wish them well in their future endeavors!

Community Home Schoolers:

Hedy Gerace
Eve Lauer
Maggie Lauer



Please contact the church office if we have missed anyone. We would also like to hear about future plans and have your future address.

College or higher school of learning graduates? Please contact us.

Bonnie and the Plowshares Youth Group need your help.

Many opportunities are listed on the next page but she is specifically asking for help with:

Cooking for others July 30 6pm-7:30pm preparing meal that can be frozen for future use for someone in need I will not be able to attend this event due to the wedding of my son Colin.

Cardboard Box Campout August 6th - staying overnight with small group of youth, getting appliance sized cardboard boxes for youth to use (6-8), and someone to make breakfast and serve for youth in am. Thank you so much!

PlowShares Service Project Group God's work, Our Hands



Plowshares continue their weekly gatherings for all who can make it, when they can make it, to make and do things that matter!! Each week will be an activity to brighten someone's day or help someone in need on Thursdays at 6pm--7:30pm through August 20.

****Project: Craft**—meet to make various crafts to be sold at the 8/8 Plowville Community Day event. Money raised will go to the 'Flooring Fund' (replace flooring in the church hall). Tuesdays at 6pm--7:30pm through August 4.

REMEMBER, the group is for youth in 5th through 12th grade. All are welcome--kids from throughout the community; Mixed ages, mixed neighborhoods, mixed school districts; Everyone working together to show love and care for others.

LIKE our Facebook page for updates, info and inspiration. College students, young adults, parents and any interested adults are NEEDED to help lend a hand, ideas, and support! PLEASE contact the church office (610-856-7242) or BonnieLeeLauer@gmail.com if you can help or have any questions.

Please plan to join the group and volunteer to help others. Adults are always welcome. Here is the schedule for the rest of the summer:

- July 16 Quilt tying, pet mats and blanket making for ARL, LWR, and Camp Noah
- July 23 Animal Rescue League – off site
- July 30 Cooking for others in need
- August 6 Cardboard Box campout-Homeless/Refugee simulation-**overnight** (cont. on page 9)

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Income for May:	\$ 16,404.79
Other Income:	\$ 1,464.07 (in/out)
Checks issued for May:	\$ 26,080.11
Checking balance brought forth:	\$ 9,737.34
Checking balance as of 5/31/15	\$ 1,526.09

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

SPECIAL FUNDS REPORT:

TOTAL ASSETS: 4/30/15	\$ 21,409.74
Special funds received in May	\$ 248.00
BALANCES:	
Checking Account balance 5/31/15	\$ 21,655.74

-Kay Good, Treas. Spec. Funds

ALTAR FLOWERS and BULLETIN SPONSORS: Please check with Linell in the church office for any openings. Reminder: Altar flowers cost is \$33 and bulletins are \$25.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS: Our thanks to those members/friends of the congregation who have designated Robeson Lutheran Church as the charity of choice for their Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you have received a letter from Thrivent indicating that you are eligible for this plan, please consider our congregation as you help direct Thrivent Financial's charitable funds.

LEAVING A LEGACY THAT GOES BEYOND DEATH

When we recall the names of the faithful who have died, our minds are often filled with precious memories. In our thoughts we are reminded that we are their legacy, that is to say, much of what we have – in both material and non-material things – has been handed down to us from them. But what will we hand down to those who follow? How will we be remembered by those who come after us? Will we leave more than an empty spot in a pew?

As you plan for the distribution of your assets at your death, please consider a charitable bequest to Robeson Lutheran Church. This is one way your faith can be transferred to the next generation. This, and other types of planned gifts, can undergird our congregation's ministry in perpetuity, providing resources that will allow future generations of Christians to worship, serve others, and continue the vital ministries of this church.

If you have questions about planned giving, you can talk to your personal financial advisor or speak to our congregational Thrivent representative John Lauer at his Morgantown office (610)-286-5986.



THANK YOU TO THOSE
WHO HAVE SIGNED UP
FOR E-GIVING.

E-giving will be an ongoing service offered here at Robeson Lutheran. You may sign up at any time. If you would like more information please contact the church office. To sign up just visit our church website at www.robesonlutheranchurch.org and look for the **"Donate Now" button.**

Thank you for considering this new giving opportunity.

August 8 Plowville Community Day service event

10am-12-property cleanup

August 13 Shady Hollow Assisted Riding Stables – off site

August 20 Assemble school supplies and backpacks-

End of summer party TBA

MUSIC NOTES:

Jim
Hendricks



**Coming to
Robeson
in September!**

An outstanding pianist, Jim Hendricks from Illinois will be performing at our church on September 27th. this fall.

He has performed

more than 1300 Christian piano concerts all across the land. Jim was a child prodigy and before going into Christian ministry, he performed with such legends as Dave Brubeck, Della Reese, and many others.

While on tour with the Glenn Miller orchestra, Jim realized he was not using his talents for God's glory. He knew it was time to leave the secular music world and follow God's calling into Christian ministry.

The Lord has greatly blessed his decision to bring glory to Christ through music.

So, please mark your calendar now to enjoy his Christian ministry through music (and don't forget to purchase your tickets for the delicious chicken dinner barbecued here that same day!)

"Sing from your heart"

Louise Wilson





SUNDAY SCHOOL START-UP **“VISIT FROM JOHNNY APPLESEED”**

September 20, 2015

Sunday, September 20, will be the first day of Sunday School for the “new” Christian Education year. Everyone preschool to adult will meet in Hoeffler Hall to hear from Johnny Appleseed. He will tell stories to illustrate his legend and he will dispel myths that have arisen. He will have apple seeds, dried fruit, nuts and toys, which Appleseed gave to children on his travels. Johnny’s Christian faith encouraged living a simple life, which included walking barefooted and wearing burlap. He will be dressed in simple attire. Please plan to be part of this special day beginning at 9:00. There will be light refreshments to be enjoyed following the presentation. Please tell you friends and neighbors about this program. I am sure children and adults will enjoy hearing from Johnny Appleseed.

WEDNESDAY COMMUNITY NIGHT **September 16, 2015**

Wednesday Community Night will begin a month earlier this year than normal. This is to combine the start of preschool and the beginning of the educational portion of the church year and have a special “kick-off” program for both groups. The evening will begin at 6:00 with a simple, child-friendly free-will offering meal. It is hoped that many families will be in attendance. The “menu” will be published in the near future. At 6:30 there will be a puppet show featuring **“Marian and Friends”**. This program is sure to appeal to people of all ages toddler through senior citizens. Spread the word to friends and neighbors to mark this date on their calendar and come out and enjoy the message and fun of Marian Gehman who combines ventriloquism with puppets for a very entertaining program. For a preview of what Marian does please go to marianandfriends.com. RSVP needed to ensure adequate food; form in September Digest & bulletins.

themselves “Lutherans.” Luther was all about reform. Just take a snapshot of Christianity in America today, and you will understand why Luther was for reform and not secession from the Church of Rome.

Throughout the centuries since Luther’s death, we Christians have splintered into so many factions, that they cannot be counted. And why did that happen? In almost every case, it came down to human pride, to differing human opinions, or to disagreements over “church laws” or “traditions” as defined by men (not necessarily God’s law). Every time a new group split from the church, Satan grinned and added a tick mark on his chalkboard. And the dissention and splitting continues today.

Some Christians don’t like the Christian church in the next town because they don’t agree with the others’ viewpoints or their stance on a particular topic. We hardly bond as much as we should with other Christians, from the individual level within a church, to churches in our own district, to other Christian denominations in our community. There are so many (uncountable!) divisions and different “flavors” of Christians, the secular world just shakes its head and perceives us all as hypocrites. Again, Satan is very pleased with the continued splintering of the so-called followers of Christ.

Imagine the US Army splitting up into platoons (up to 30 soldiers) and spreading them out all over the place. How effective would these small groups be in fighting an enemy army? How effective are we in trying to do what’s right in the world? Robeson Lutheran in particular, as a single church is doing phenomenal work! But I am biased. Just imagine if all the Christian churches came together to do the Lord’s work. What an awesome force it would be, and what we could accomplish *for the good* - would be the “uncountable” number.

However, due to the nature of man, a reformed Christian army is not likely to happen any time soon in America. But we can certainly do a lot to prevent further erosion and dissention - from splitting us into more Christian splinters. Well now, I seem to have run out of room and will have to broach the gay marriage topic in next month’s Church Digest. For now, let’s all read up on our New Testament and try to chalk up some points for Team Jesus in the days and weeks to come. God bless.

Division: The Devil's Favorite Math - Part 1 of 2

By Chris Gerace

There is a Chinese saying that goes something like this: "Better to be a dog in a peaceful time, than to be a man in a chaotic period." Certainly our world today can be described as a chaotic period. Aside from everything else going on in the world, our US Supreme Court has recently ruled in favor of gay marriages in all fifty states. While it is a historic event, it is one that only seems to add to the polarization of the American public. We might wonder, "Do we really need more controversy? More debate and dissent among us?" Better yet we might wonder, "How should the Christian community tackle this particular topic?"

Before I continue on to "the topic," please allow me to go off on a tangent. There is little denying that Christians in America have certainly experienced challenges from many different sources throughout our lives. Atheists, other religions, church-leavers, biased media, lobbyists, etc., have all in varying degrees challenged or, at times, even misrepresented the Christian Faith. However, there is one criticism from these various sources that I must somewhat agree with, and that is the presence of Christian hypocrisy. [At this point, the reader might be saying, 'who asked you for your opinion?'] Clarification: I am certainly not implying that 100% of Christians are hypocrites. But read on...

The reasons why I have the audacity to bring up Christian hypocrisy come straight from the good book itself. I must ask: "Who in the New Testament does Jesus most rebuke? Does he chastise sinners? No. Most of the Scriptures tell of Jesus chastising the lawmakers and even his own Disciples; the former, for misinterpreting or twisting the Hebrew laws and abusing their power, and the latter for not getting the basic points of His teachings.

The Bible was in part written as a guide for what not to do. Yet, here we are in the twenty-first century, many of us repeating the same mistakes over and over again. We hold the Bible as the most holy of books, but our humanity causes us to relive those very failures and bad attitudes that fill the Bible. Case in point: Christian division.

As Lutherans, it is important to remind ourselves that Martin Luther's ultimate mission was to "reform" (to repair) the Church, not to divide it further. Most religious scholars agree that Martin Luther would be sick if he lived to see a group of Christians separate from the Papacy, form their own group "in protest" and name

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL "A WEEK OF EXCITEMENT"

"Son Spark Labs" was the title of this year's Vacation Bible School and it was filled with lots of science experiments, Bible stories, games and crafts. There were 88 children in attendance and 38 teachers and helpers. The youth who helped in the various centers did a wonderful job. In the past these teens were busy with projects away from the church during VBS, but the help they provided this year in our classrooms will be greatly anticipated again next year for sure. It's great to see many of the children from the preschool and the community attend VBS here at Robeson. It is also nice to see so many faces return each year through the age of 6th grade. Many churches stop their programs at 4th grade, but we have been very fortunate to have a nice sized class of 5th and 6th graders.

The staff did a wonderful job of keeping each day in order as the children moved from center to center. The preschool group was always doing something fun or they were enjoying snack.

Thank you to the parents for either helping in the classrooms or for providing transportation to and from VBS. It takes staff, parents and students working together to make a successful VBS and that was the case for "Son Spark Labs".



FILL THE SCHOOL BUS: We will be collecting school supplies through August 2. Plowshares will assemble the book bags for needy students in the Twin Valley School District. Please place your donations in the school bus in the new foyer. Thank you.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP OUR CHURCH FAMILY & COMMUNITY:

DEFIBRILLATOR FUND:

TWENTY YEARS AGO, Justin McQuillan, was killed by a baseball here at Plow Field. Today, this could possibly be avoided with the help of a defibrillator. We have them available here at the church for some time but not at the ballfield. If a child is struck in the chest by a ball, time is of the essence. Larry Hummel gave a brief temple talk at the service on July 5 about this situation and how you can help make Plow a safer ball field.

Contributions can be directed through the church but please make sure any checks are clearly marked DEFIB on the memo line.



PLOWVILLE COMMUNITY DAY

August 8th



- I am willing to help with the clean-up from 10-12
- I can help with set-up/ take-down Saturday morning and after 4
- I will help wherever needed on this day
- I would like more information about this event and how I might be involved
- I have items to donate for the flea market table sponsored by Plowshares
- I would like to rent a space at the Flea Market / Bazaar (vendors, crafter, flea market items, etc. are all welcome!)
- I am interested in participating in the Battle of the Bands

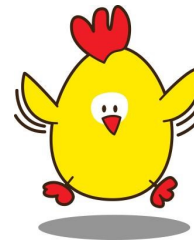
Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(Please place this slip in the offering plate or drop off at the church office.)

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP:



ANNUAL CHICKEN BARBECUE will be held on Sunday, September 27. Mark your calendar and purchase your tickets now from any Outreach Committee member or the church office. Price is just \$8 and includes 1/2 chicken, baked potato, pepper cabbage, roll & butter. Baked goods will be available for sale.

This is also the day that Jim Hendricks, pianist, will be our featured guest at both worship services, 7:45 & 10:15 a.m.

FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS on October 20th at Boscovs! A \$5.00 donation (all \$5 goes to our church) will get you a 25% discount coupon to be used all day at any Boscov store. Last year we made \$1000 so please support the Outreach Committee who is sponsoring this fundraiser! See any member or the church office for tickets.



ANNUAL BAZAAR—November 7, 8-2; Plan now to rent a



HOLIDAY BAZAAR

table, make some baked goods, gather some gently used household items, or just come out and spend the morning! There will be lots of crafts, flea market items, baked goods, delicious food and more!

Please mark your calendar! This is our biggest fundraiser here at Robeson.