



**St. Peter's United Church of Christ**

905 S. Russell Street

Champaign, IL 61821

217-356-3635

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www.stpetersucc.com



## A Note from the Pastor

Dear Friends,

As I write this newsletter article, my husband is on his way to spend the night with his father who is dying. Vernon, my father-in-law, has always been a great man of faith. He has been an elder in the Presbyterian Church, faithful worshipper of God, and devoted servant in too many ways to count. He has been a great love for many people, including me. And I think during this time of lent, it is most impressive that somehow, his body, mind, and soul have chosen this time to fade. The grass withers, the flowers fade . . . our bodies are dust and to dust they shall return. People of great, lifelong faith die beside those who are just beginning to open their eyes to the largeness of God's grace. The thief dies beside the King of the Jews. The unchurched die beside the lifelong church member. And all who can see, whether or not it's all their lives, like Vernon, or at the last minute, like the thief . . . will see the glory of God in their last breath . . . and we will take them off the cross, off their death bed and carry them to a tomb or casket to be buried. Seems like an ending, when in our spiritual reality, it's only the beginning.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending.", said someone named John who had a vision of eternity and a vision of God's presence with us. God will determine the ending. Our bodies are finite, but our souls live forever. Vernon, the truest, most divine sense of Vernon . . . that part that was made in the image of God, will live forever with God. And how do I know? It's by the fruits that blessed me and the rest of the world when he was alive on earth for me to know him. It's by the fruits of the confession of the thief on the cross. We confess: I believe. I am willing to serve. I belong to You, great Creator!

Lent is a good time to recognize that we are dusty, sinful earthly creatures. And it's a good time to recognize whose we are. Jesus turned towards the thief and said he would be with him in paradise! Paradise! Everlasting life is like paradise. A place of beauty and glory! A place of grace and wholeness. A place where so much love surrounds and embodies us that we cannot even imagine now. Easter is a time to celebrate that God rolls away the dead stones of our lives . . . the ones that carry weights and burdens. Easter is a time to celebrate

that God makes all things new! God raises us, like his very Son, to new and glorious places even while we are here on earth, so we may see the glimpses of heaven that await us.

I have seen the glimpses of heaven in Vernon as he smiles when I've brought him pie, as he offers help to others without complaining, as he extends his love to his family and friends in so many ways. I've seen glimpses of heaven in you as we have worshipped together, served sausage and sauerkraut together, met together in committee meetings . . . visioned together what the future of St. Peter's might be. Christ has risen! Christ has risen indeed! And because of that resurrection, we can also spring forth Easter lilies, new life, new passion, new energy and new ways of being Christ in the world, in the community and in each other! Blessed Lent! Happy Easter!

Peace, Laurie



## Lenten and Holy Week Schedule

**Wednesday Drama Services**

6:30-7:00 p.m.

### Sunday Services – Lenten Sermon Series

"Yes, Lord, I have sinned but I have several excellent excuses!"

### Maundy Thursday Service

April 9<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 p.m., Communion and Tenebrae

### Easter Services

Early Easter Service – 8:00 a.m.

Easter Breakfast – 8:30 a.m., thanks to Mark Sterrett and LiAnne Kitchen



Easter Service – 10:00 a.m., Communion offered



**"He is Afraid.  
He is Totally Alone.  
He is 3,000,000 Light  
Years From Home."**

## Family Movie Night!

And oldie but goodie!!! We will be showing the movie of E.T.!!! April 15. At 5:30 p.m., come, bring your dinner and eat with us, and then we will watch the movie together and have treats. Invite your friends!!!!

## Kudos!

Thanks to Judy Moller Vaiden for handling the disposal of the excess flower vases. We appreciate the donation of her time and the extra space we have in the flower room!



## A Vision to the Future

Thanks for everyone who has taken their one hour to celebrate the strengths and blessings of St. Peter's!!!! It truly has been a great and wonderful opportunity to recognize our opportunities and how very blessed we are! The Consistory has the report from the two sessions and they are also posted on the bulletin board. Both sessions are consolidated into one report, but I can tell you they were almost identical in all aspects! St. Peter's is truly coming together has one body of Christ with a new vision of ministry! That new vision will be open and welcoming to all people; will need energy and time to create events of faith and fun for all sorts of people of all ages; and will create a new and growing congregation that is filled with joy and caring! As the Consistory and I look at the hopes for the future, we will be looking to congregational members, committees, boards and groups within the congregation to make this happen! Keep your ears and eyes open for chances for your talents and gifts to be used for God's light to shine at St. Peter's UCC!

## Save the Date!

Vacation Bible School will be June 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. (including dinner). We will all be in the swamp at Group Publishing's Curriculum of "Crocodile Dock"! We will need your

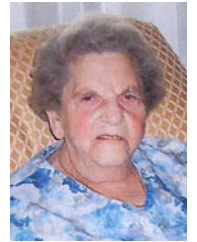
hands, your hearts and your imaginations! And especially, we will need you to invite any and all children you know!



## In Memoriam



On February 10, 2009, **Paula Schmidt** passed from this life into eternal life where God lovingly welcomed his good and faithful daughter. Paula was born in Offenbach, Germany on June 13, 1922 to Metzger ("butcher" in English) Karl Wilhelm Gebhardt and Anna Flora Gebhardt. Anna's maiden name was Braun. In 1958, She immigrated to the United States to live with one of her two previously immigrated sisters. She has a sister who remained in Offenbach, as well. Paula took a position at the University of Illinois in charge of central supply at the McKinley Hospital and worked there for 30 years. She joined St. Peter's UCC in 1959.



She knew Heinrich Schmidt from Germany and he joined Paula in the U.S. in June of 1969. They were married on August 30, 1969 at St. Peter's UCC by Rev. Noffke. Heinrich has retired from being a mechanic for Volkswagon. This August, they would've have celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Paula had some accidents and illnesses that prevented her from attending worship in past years, but regularly maintained her membership and her love for St. Peter's Church. Paula enjoyed reading, Scrabble and playing cards. Heinrich and Paula also enjoyed the German Club in the Central Illinois area. Before Paula's illness prevented her from doing so, she and Heinrich enjoyed ballroom dancing so much and were so good at it, they were prize winners!

Paula's sisters in Germany and one in Texas are still surviving. Please keep Heinrich in your prayers as he grieves the loss of his beloved, Paula. There have been no services, but we will celebrate Paula's life during Totenfest. If you want to send Heinrich a note or card, please send it to: Heinrich Schmidt, 601½ E. Mumford Drive, Urbana, IL 61801.



On March 1, 2009, **Hilda M. Roberts** passed from this life to life eternal. Hilda, who was residing at Country Health Nursing Home in Gifford, was 91.

Hilda was born September 17, 1917, a daughter of Roy and Dena (Ackerman) Carmien. She married Austin D. Roberts on September 17, 1940, in Kentucky.

Survivors include one son, Roy Roberts of Rantoul; two daughters, Beverly Sandidge of Champaign and Kaye Groebner of Minneapolis, Minnesota; two sisters, Louise Wann and Janet Heath both of St. Joseph; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Hilda served as a volunteer worker at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana.

## Weight Loss Support Group

We are underway, we as Amazing Shrinking People! We are following a book called, *All is Forgiven, Move on!* by Janice Taylor, who calls herself "The Lady of Weight Loss". Our group has an emotional and spiritual component. The group is open to newcomers, so please, if you are thinking of it . . . try us out! 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.



## Church Mailbag

*We want to express our deep appreciation and thanks for all the calls, visits, cards and prayers during our hospital stays. We are working hard now at getting, and staying well!*

Bernice and Omer Benn

## April Ushers

Lee Eichhorst  
Sandy Eichhorst

Gary Hollen  
Jeff Jewett

George Malloch  
Larry Zahnd

## April Birthdays

- 2 Dale Sebens  
Marcella Nance
- 4 Phyllis Jones  
John Bishop, Jr.  
Kate Berry  
Laura LeBaugh  
Sharon Conatser
- 5 Tracie O'Neill  
Lizzie Hoerman  
Tesslyn Dahl  
Bonnie Taylor
- 6 Christopher Wingler
- 11 David Ho  
Morgan Bishop
- 12 Joyce Krahlung
- 19 Helen Schowengerdt
- 20 Richard Swearingen
- 21 Roger Pointer
- 23 Devan Bishop
- 24 Betty Hornback
- 25 Guy Foster
- 29 Andy Zahnd  
Courtney Lehmann



## April Anniversaries

- 3 William and Mary Sue O'Neill
- 16 Bill and Mary Limp (1967)
- 22 Kris and Tricia McCarthy (2006)
- 23 Larry and Kim Brown (2005)
- 28 Gary and Norma Hollen (1957)



Editor's Note: We apologize for omissions or errors. Information for the newsletter mailing list, birthday list and anniversary list is taken from Church records. Please report changes in writing to the Church Office. You may mail changes, place notes in the Office Manager's mailbox or send an email to [office@stpetersucc.com](mailto:office@stpetersucc.com). Thanks for your help!

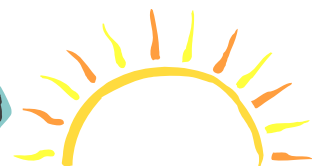
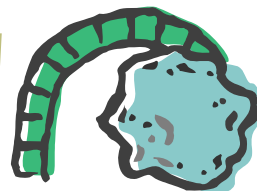
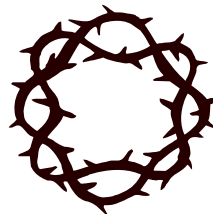
## Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the May issue of *Connections* is Wednesday, April 15. Please submit your articles to the Church Office or leave them in the Office Manager's mailbox. Please include your name and phone number. Thank you!



## Lost and Found

A ladies watch and black leather glove have turned up in the Church Office. If you are missing these items, please contact the office to claim them.



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Champaign, Illinois 61821-4419

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## NEWSLETTER

### Church Office Phone: (217) 356-3635

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Email: [office@stpetersucc.com](mailto:office@stpetersucc.com)

Office hours: Monday through Friday  
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Answering machine available after hours

### Parish Nurse Phone: (217) 356-3467

Flexible hours. Will arrange meetings by appointment.  
Confidential answering machine is available.

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### Church Staff

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Parish Nurse  
Choir Director  
Organist  
Custodian

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Bonnie S. Taylor  
LiAnne Kitchen  
Zachary Carrettin  
Teresa Kang  
Carol Martin

### Newsletter Staff

Editor and Layout  
Historian

Bonnie S. Taylor  
Virginia Zindars

### Worship Schedule

10:00 a.m. Worship

