

Reflections

A Monthly Newsletter of the Spotswood Reformed Church

429 Main Street, Spotswood, NJ 08884

Serving the community since 1821

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September 2016

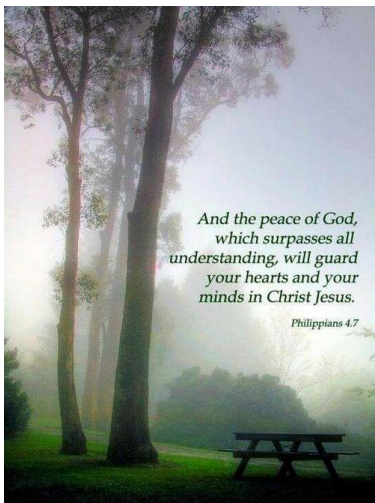
From the Pastor's Desk

September 11, 2001, is a day America and the world will never forget. So many lives were lost: fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, friends and companions. Families from around the world bear the scars of what happened that day. And while the devastation from the attacks of September 11th is unforgettable, fifteen years later many of us find ourselves thrust into the midst of smaller but no less devastating personal catastrophes, and we wonder how we'll cope.

The good news – even great news – is that there is hope to be discovered amidst the rubble of tragedy. And that hope is found in God and in his church.

Many people wonder how God could have allowed the tragedy of September 11th to take place; or how God could allow any tragedy to happen, and there have been many in the intervening years. What can He be thinking? Is God really in control? Can we trust Him to run the universe if He allows horrible events to take the lives of so many innocent people?

It's important to recognize that God dwells in a different realm. He occupies another dimension. "My thoughts



are not like your thoughts. Your ways are not like my ways. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Make special note of the word *like*. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are they even *like* ours. We aren't even in the same neighborhood. We're

thinking, "Preserve the body." He's thinking, "Save the soul." We dream of a pay raise. He dreams of raising the dead. We avoid pain and seek peace. God uses pain to

bring peace. "I'm going to live before I die," we resolve. "Die so you can live," He instructs. We love what rusts. He loves what endures. We rejoice at our successes. He rejoices at our confessions. We show our children the Nike star with the million-dollar smile and say, "Be like Mike." God points to the crucified carpenter with the bloody lips and a torn side and says, "Be like Christ."

Our thoughts are not like God's thoughts. Our ways are not like his ways. He has a different agenda. He dwells in a different dimension. He lives on another plane. He is untainted by the atmosphere of sin, unbridled by the time line of history, unhindered by the weariness of the body.

What controls you doesn't control Him. What troubles you doesn't trouble Him. What fatigues you doesn't fatigue Him. Is an eagle disturbed by traffic? No, he rises above it. Is the whale perturbed by a hurricane? Of course not; he plunges beneath it. Is the lion flustered by the mouse standing directly in his way? No, he steps over it. How much more is God able to soar above, plunge beneath, and step over the troubles of the earth! What is impossible with man is possible with God (see Matthew 19:26).

How vital it is that we come together as the people of God to worship and pray, to praise Him and give thanks, to honor the Almighty, the God of the universe. How vital it is that we know and affirm for one another the knowledge that the living Spirit of God is a never-ending source of strength for us as individuals and as a community of faith.

See you on Sundays – Shalom,

JER



Happy Moments,
Praise God.

Difficult Moments,
Seek God.

Quiet Moments,
Worship God.

Painful Moments,
Trust God.

Every Moment,
Thank God.

Worship Team

Summer is drawing to a close!! Thanks to everyone, both in our congregation and outside of it, who helped make the summer worship so rich!

As we look forward to the beginning of a new plan year, September 11th finds us commissioning our Sunday School teachers and celebrating our kids! September 18th is our third Sunday Praise service, and September 25th is our Psalter Sunday when the choir will sing the lectionary Psalm for the week, Psalm 146!

The choir will begin rehearsing in September and we are asking anyone who loves to sing to come out to help with the singing of our Christmas music this year! We will be doing some great music by well-known contemporary Christian musicians! Rehearsals will be each Wednesday evening in the church sanctuary from 7:15 to 8:30 PM.



Also, as a reminder, we are asking *everyone* to bring a CUP pantry food donation on the first and third Sundays of the month! One thing that is ***always, always*** needed and much appreciated is cereal. I am told that this item literally flies off the shelves.

The Worship Team will be hosting a joint team meeting for all teams of our church and anyone who is interested in coming together to plan a special worship service for Thanksgiving Sunday this year. The meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27th at 7:30 PM. Keep a watch over your emails and the bulletin in the next several weeks for more details.

Looking forward to October, we will be celebrating World Communion on October 2nd where we focus on the everyday reality of the unity of the Christian Church.

Our Gathered Community Comes Together

Sunday, September 4

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Communion Sunday
Please remember your CUP Offering

Wednesday, September 7

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, September 11

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Commissioning of Teachers
Chancel Choir sings
Coffee Hour following Worship

Wednesday, September 14

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, September 18

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Praise Team Leads Worship
Communion Service
Please remember your CUP Offering

Wednesday, September 21

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, September 25

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Psalter Sunday – Psalm 146
Chancel Choir sings

Wednesday, September 26

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, October 2

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
World Communion Sunday
Please remember your CUP Offering
Chancel Choir sings

Wednesday, October 5

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, October 9

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
Soloist
Coffee Hour following Worship

Wednesday, October 12

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, October 16

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost
Praise Team Leads Worship
Communion Service
Please remember your CUP Offering

Wednesday, October 19

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, October 23

Twenty-Three Sunday after Pentecost
Psalter Sunday – Psalm 84
Chancel Choir sings

Wednesday, October 26

Christmas Music Rehearsal – 7:15 to 8:30 PM
Chancel Choir Rehearsal – 8:30 PM

Sunday, October 30

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Chancel Choir sings

LITURGISTS

9/4 Jan Ortt
9/25 Pat Hampson
10/2 George Sliker
10/23 Chuck Hager
11/6 Mark Ruckdeschel
11/27 Margaret Tierney

CHILDREN'S SERMONS

9/11 Rev. Ribbans
9/25 Pat Hampson
10/9 Carole George
10/23 Mark Ruckdeschel
11/13 Rev. Ribbans
11/27 Pat Hampson

If you are unable to serve on the date listed, please find someone to cover for you and let Sherry Ruckdeschel know of any changes to this schedule. Thank you!

Calling for More Volunteers to Sign Up as Greeters

We now have a sign-up sheet located in the Narthex for greeters over the next several months. Please, please, please check out the open dates and let's try to have all the days covered in the next couple of weeks!

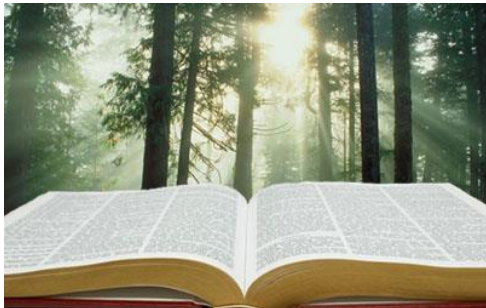


“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness!” (Psalm 100:2)

Kathy Romero for
The Worship Team

The Lectionary for September

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Psalm



119:105

September 4 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1:1-21;
Luke 14:25-33

September 11 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14;
Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-17;
Luke 15:1-10

September 18 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Psalm 79:1-9;
Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13

September 25 – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16;
Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

Mission & Outreach Corner

Soles4Souls

The Mission & Outreach Team would like to thank all those who donated so generously to the Soles4Souls shoe drive. We collected 663 pairs of shoes for those in need around the world. And very special thanks to Marcia and Victoria Halbert, Carrie Lawrence, Kim, Mandi and Maggie Miller, Barb Sliker, Krystal VanWagenine and Peggy White who helped to package and count all of the shoes.



Carrie Lawrence for
The Mission & Outreach Team

Mission Trips

This was a busy summer for Judie Nicol! As you may remember, last summer Judie participated in a mission trip to North Carolina. This year Judie answered the call to go on two mission trips. The first trip was a week in Haiti sponsored by Poverty Resolutions. Early on Saturday, June 25th at 1:15 AM the group of more than 40 left for their flight from JFK to Port-Au-Prince. Upon arriving, the group was taken to their hotel about an hour away. The Poverty Resolutions representative gave them a tour of the area and prepared them for the week ahead. Along the way, the group saw firsthand the poverty-stricken country. Many homes have openings for windows, but there's no glass to protect them from the elements. Many homes have no running water.



Judie found out that just as we have ice cream trucks that play music to let everyone know they are coming, Haiti has water trucks. There are wells for water, but it takes about three children to work the pump handle. With the high heat (over 90 degrees every day) and the high humidity, the demand for water is great.

During the week, there were many areas for the volunteers to choose from: agriculture, construction, mission and outreach, Vacation Bible School, assisting at the orphanage, or assisting at the hospital. Volunteers could focus on one area, or choose to do as many as time allowed. Construction consisted of helping Poverty Resolutions in building a facility to house 48 Haitians who



will work in the fields that are also being developed by the organization.

In addition to helping with construction, Judie assisted with agriculture—which included helping to clear an area around the building and plant various types of plants.



She also worked in the banana field—watering the banana plants by filling and carrying buckets of water about 50 feet back and forth. She also assisted at the orphanage, where 57 children live, by spending quality time

with the children who are in desperate need of love and attention. Another day Judie helped with the babies at the hospital. The “babies” include children up to five years old. Because the babies far outnumber the hospital workers, these children spend a lot of time alone in the cribs with very little human contact. The help provided by the volunteers is very much appreciated.

Each morning as the bus of volunteers pulled up, the Haitians ran after the bus. They were coming to join in the work. The first day the volunteers were fed rice and beans for lunch. Later they found out that what food they didn't finish was given to the Haitian workers. The agreement with the Haitians is that if they work, which they do willingly, they are given a meal. The rest of the week most of the volunteers skipped lunch so there would be more for the workers.

The volunteers also attended the church next to the new Poverty Resolutions building, which is held in a tent. There is a strict dress code that includes everyone wearing shoes—even if they are just flip flops. There are no hymnals, but that doesn't stop the congregation from worshipping in song for about 15 minutes at each service. A few of the attendees have Bibles, but most do not. When it was time for offering, the volunteers were told that they did not have to give, but if they wanted to give they were not to give more than \$1. Most of the volunteers gave, and when they did, the congregation started clapping their thanks to God and to the volunteers.



One thing that struck Judie is that she never saw anyone fighting. The children got along so well. Spending the week with the Haitian people touched Judie and gave her a different perspective. She is truly grateful to have had this experience. Although, she did run into a bit of trouble coming back through customs...with a contraband banana in her purse. Luckily, they didn't detain her too long!

After a month at home, Judie joined a group from Highland Park Reformed Church to provide assistance to three families in South Carolina. This year was very different than last year. Rather than staying in a house and cooking their own meals, the group stayed in a church gymnasium with dividers to separate the women and men. Meals were prepared for them, and it was lights out at 9:00 PM, because another group of volunteers had to get up very early. The volunteers participated in roofing, replacing insulation and sheetrock, spackling, painting, laying laminate flooring, etc. There was a lot of work to be done and the assistance was very much appreciated!



Thank you to all who covered Judie in prayer during her trips. And thank you, Judie, for being such an inspiration.

Christian Education

Pre-Confirmation Class

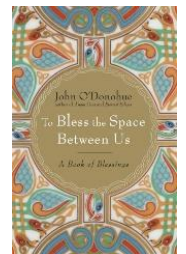
Pre-confirmation class for 7th and 8th grade students will begin on Sunday, September 11th. This class is a pre-requisite to next year's confirmation class. If you know of anyone who is not currently attending our church but will want to be confirmed in 2018, please contact the church office so that information can be provided to them.

*Mark Ruckdeschel for
The Christian Education Team*

Book Recommendation

“To Bless the Space Between Us”
by John O'Donohue

It has been said of this man, poet, priest, that he could deliver a blessing for anything! And this book is full of just such poetic, prayerful blessings! Here is a beautiful one:



*On the day when the weight deadens
On your shoulders and you stumble,
May the clay dance to balance you.
And when your eyes freeze behind the gray window
And the ghost of loss gets into you,
may a flock of colors, indigo, red, green and azure blue,
Come to awaken in you a meadow of delight.
When the canvas frays in the Curragh of thought
And a stain of ocean blackens beneath you,
May there come across the waters
A path of yellow moonlight to bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow wind work these words
Of love around you, an invisible cloak
To mind your life.*

Elizabeth Circle

The Elizabeth Circle will begin the Fall Season on Thursday, September 15th with a meeting at 1:00 PM at the church. For anyone who has been thinking of joining the organization, this is the time to come out and enjoy planning the year's activities with us. We love new members and visitors!

As in the past, we are planning to hold the **Annual Bazaar** in November. We are working in the following areas: **Bake Shop**, **Gift items** (home crafted articles are most sought after), **Trash and Treasure** (good items that are no longer needed) and the **Quilt Raffle**. Your participation in any of these projects is very much appreciated.



The quilters have been working all summer preparing the quilt. It is called "Mae's Heavenly Stars" in memory of Mae Vaughn, who passed away recently. Mae was a great quilter and a member of the Elizabeth Circle. Our current quilters are Barbara Schmidt, Peggy White, Judie Nicol, Joanne Dombroski, and a recent joiner, Trina Moschella.

Raffle tickets are available now and may be purchased from any member of the Elizabeth Circle. A flyer will be posted soon with a picture of the quilt and additional information.

*Junetta Bunce for
The Elizabeth Circle*

Pixie Preschool

Pixie is excited to begin the new year on Wednesday, September 7th. All our classrooms have gotten a long awaited update. It's amazing what fresh paint and a new floor will do to rejuvenate an old classroom. Our new look has certainly gained the attention of all our current parents and children. New prospective families have also been impressed with our new look. We would like to invite all of you to take a tour to see what many years of fundraising can accomplish. Our next plan is to update our tired classroom furniture and Big Room equipment. Let the new year of fundraising begin!!

back to
School



Thank you to all church members that have supported our fundraising efforts through the years. We truly appreciate your help.

*Gail Parizman
Director, Pixie Preschool*

Interfaith Network of Care

Please join Interfaith Network of Care (INC) as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary.

When: Friday, September 16, 2016
7:00 PM – 1100 PM

Where: Knights of Columbus
30 Crescent Avenue, Spotswood

Cost: \$25 per ticket

Dinner, music, dancing, cash bar, door prizes, 50/50, and a photo booth. We will be honoring Connie Pfeil and John Zoeller. Hope you can join us. Tickets will go quickly for this event. Please send a check to INC, 62 South Main Street, Milltown, New Jersey 08850. For additional information, call 732.247.1655.

New Beginnings

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

If we sincerely want to change ourselves for the better, we must start on the inside and work our way out from there. Lasting change doesn't occur "out there;" it occurs "in here." It occurs, not in the shifting sands of our own particular circumstances, but in the quiet depths of our own hearts.

Are you in search of a new beginning or even a new you? Are you hoping to make dramatic improvements or to break unhealthy habits? If so, don't expect changing circumstances to miraculously transform you into the person you want to become. Transformation starts with God, and it starts in the silent center of a humble human heart—like yours.



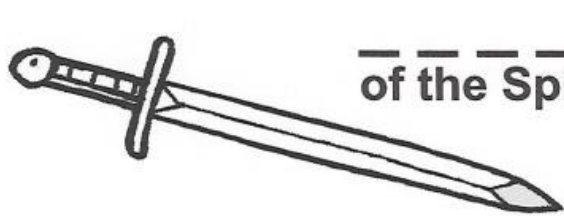
*"When we focus on God, the scene changes. He's in control of our lives; nothing lies outside of the realm of His redemptive grace. Even when we make mistakes, fail in relationships, or deliberately make bad choices, God can redeem us."
Penelope J. Stokes*

From the book "Hugs, Daily Inspirations for Women" which contains 365 Devotions to Inspire Your Day.

Just for Kids

THE ARMOR OF GOD

Ephesians 6:10-17



_____ d
of the Spirit

sh _____
of Faith



b _ l t
of Truth



h _____ et
of Salvation



b _____ plate
of Righteousness

_____ oes
of the Gospel



2 Timothy 2:3



Prayer Requests

Janet Applegate – at home in Old Bridge; *Ann Bailey* – at home in Spotswood; *Chris Broscious* (Sharon Farmer’s son) – at home in Kentucky; *Esmee Chica* (Pat Hampson’s great-granddaughter) – at home in Colonia; *Kyle Davidson* (Barbara Brain’s great nephew) – at home in Oregon; *Pat DeFazio* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Teresa Dunlop* (Margaret Tierney’s sister) – at home in East Stroudsburg, PA; *Megan Farmer* – at home in Monroe Twp.; *Dave Holzman* (Kelly Ort’s friend) – at JFK Hospital in Edison; *Linda Rodriguez* (Shirley Leary’s and Barbara Jagemann’s niece) – at home in Florida; *Tracy Suchcicki* – at UPenn in Philadelphia, PA; *Joan Worthington* (Shirley Leary’s sister) at a rehabilitation facility in Toms River; *Beverly Jawidzik* and *Marie Riddle* – at the Reformed Church Home.



Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| September 3 | Nancy Goretskie |
| September 6 | Erik Stubbs |
| September 7 | Mandi Miller |
| September 9 | Brielle Scheid |
| September 9 | Louise Woods |
| September 12 | Kristyn Corace |
| September 17 | Jim Halbert |
| September 20 | Tom Lucas |
| September 22 | Maggie Miller |
| September 22 | Art Radozycki |
| September 23 | Kyle Horsch |
| September 23 | Ethan Testa |
| September 25 | Jim Ribbans |
| September 27 | Wendy DeGroot |
| September 29 | Ron Jagemann |

Reformed Church Home Friends’ Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| September 1 | Patricia DeFalco |
| September 1 | Paul Lomangino |
| September 3 | Ruth Litow |
| September 9 | Elvira Zielinski |
| September 13 | Jeanne Defranco |
| September 17 | Richard Bagamary |
| September 19 | Bob Berardi |
| September 20 | Josephine Maffei |
| September 22 | Genevieve Lynk |
| September 23 | Frances Moken |



Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| September 10 | Bob & Carrie Lawrence |
| September 13 | Ron & Barbara Jagemann |
| September 13 | Art & Linda Radozycki |
| September 22 | Chuck & Mary Ann Hager |

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.

For further information, and how to become involved in our church life, please call on one or more of the following people:

James E. Ribbans, Pastor
 Joseph W. Woods, Pastor Emeritus
 Kathryn Romero, Minister of Music, Elder
 Linda Soley, Church Treasurer
 Charles Uhl, Financial Secretary
 Sherry Ruckdeschel, Administrative Assistant, Clerk of Consistory, Newsletter Editor
 Junetta Bunce – Elder, Interfaith Network of Care
 Sharon Farmer – Deacon
 Carole George – New Circle Chair
 Rita Hussey – Sunday School Superintendent
 Carrie Lawrence – Deacon, COHM Board Member
 James Lockwood – Interfaith Network of Care
 Jennifer Mullen-Sommer – Elder Delegate to Classis
 Janice Ortt – Elder
 Mark Ruckdeschel – Vice President of Consistory, Elder
 Alice Ryan – Elizabeth Circle Chair, Alice's CUP Food Pantry Coordinator for SRC
 Kevin Styles – Deacon
 Michelle Tennill – Deacon
 Ken VanWageninge – Cemetery Chair
 Peggy White – Elder

TEAM AND TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Building & Grounds Team

Nancy Cano
 Kelly Ortt
 David Sliker
 Kevin Styles

Christian Education Team

Mark Ruckdeschel – Team Chair
 Elizabeth Goretskie
 Marcia Halbert
 Victoria Halbert
 Rita Hussey
 Cassidy Ortt
 Janice Ortt
 Nikki Ortt
 Tracy Suchcicki
 Michelle Tennill

Finance Team

Kevin Styles – Team Chair
 George Berry
 Chuck Hager
 Linda Soley
 Charlie Uhl
 Ken VanWageninge

HOPE Team

Junetta Bunce
 Joanne Dombroski
 Carole George
 Rita Hussey
 Judie Nicol
 Kathy Romero
 Mark Ruckdeschel
 Sherry Ruckdeschel
 George Sliker
 Tracy Suchcicki
 Peggy White

Mission & Outreach Team

Carrie Lawrence – Team Co-Chair
 Laura Swiderski – Team Co-Chair
 Pat DeFazio
 Joanne Dombroski
 Sharon Farmer
 Eunice Harrigfeld
 Pat Hilman
 Judie Nicol
 Alice Ryan
 Barbara Sliker
 Peggy White

Worship Team

Carole George – Team Co-Chair
 Kathy Romero – Team Co-Chair
 Sherry Ruckdeschel
 Margaret Tierney

Please contact the church office with any change to Team memberships.