

The Pioneer

'Preparing for others to follow'

Newsletter of the Preble Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
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~ September 2017 ~

...from the Pastor's Pen...

Dear Friends,

After starting my annual September harvest and fall Pen article, I erased it. Seems like talking about ordinary, routine patterns is comforting reassuring, but may not be what is needed at this time in our country and world.

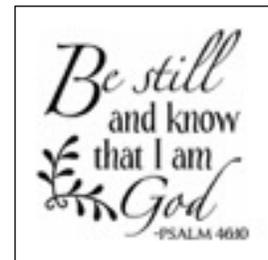
On July 25, 1999, at Woodstock 99 on the East Stage in Rome, NY, Elvis Costello sang these words, which still seem appropriate for today:

*As I walk through this wicked world
Searchin' for light in the midst of insanity,
I ask myself, is all hope lost?
Is there only pain and hatred, and misery?*

*And each time I feel like this inside, there's only one thing I want to know:
what's so funny 'bout peace, love, and understanding? Ohhhh..
What's so funny 'bout peace, love, and understanding?*

*And as I walk on through troubled times
My spirit gets so downhearted sometimes.
So where are the strong, and who are the trusted?
And where is the harmony? Sweet harmony"*

*Cause each time I feel it slippin' away, just makes me want to cry.
What's so funny 'bout peace, love, and understanding?*



and

The lectionary reading for August 20 from Matthew 15 focused on Jesus' talk with the disciples about those Pharisees who complained about how the disciples failed to comply with rules and regulations that told them how to worship God and live according to the Law.

But Jesus came right back at the Pharisees and quoted Isaiah's prophecy (29:13) about *people who make a big show of saying the right things, but their heart isn't in it. They act like they worship God, but they just use God as a cover for teaching whatever suits their fancy.*

I believe that we try very hard to rely upon God's word with honesty.

The question Elvis Costello asked in 1999 is still relevant today as we confront the shock, confusion, and tragedy unfolding in so many venues in our country and world. It's at times like these when we must remember the words of Jesus and let them guide us: *What contaminates someone in God's sight is what comes out of the heart (when it is) evil thoughts and arguments, murder, lies, insults...It is the stuff of the heart that counts in God's sight."*

Nothing for us as Christians has changed because of the frightening events of today's environment. God still works constantly in the world. God is Still Speaking, and Jesus' words still reign in our hearts, guiding us in our response to the hatred expressed around us. What is in the heart of those who follow the Way? Love, acceptance, the willingness to compromise, the desire to create a win-win for all, and the determination to hear and act upon the healthy, hopeful, and promising words that come from not only our own hearts but from the hearts of other people.

May we, as members and friends of this little country church, speak to and hear each other in ways that reveal our discipleship, and may we act upon those impulses of our hearts. In that way, we will be instruments for peace, love, and understanding among all people.

In faith and love,
Pastor Becky

Party on the Porch and Community Ice Cream Social!

Sunday, September 24th, 12 noon

Hold the date and the time to gather together as a church and wider community to celebrate and dedicate the new front porch, and especially to thank everyone who donated and gave in any way of their talent and resources to complete this necessary project.

Flower Arranging Workshop

Many thanks to Master Gardener Lee Benson who taught four eager students about how to arrange garden and store-bought flowers for our Sunday altars. We had a ball!

We gathered in the dining room around two short tables and sat on kids' chairs, not a problem. Scattered all around were our own garden flowers and some that Lee brought from the store, along with greens of all kinds and florist supplies. Lee demo'd for us and we then let our creative juices flow!

The Sunday altar reflected our efforts with seven arrangements, plus Lee's beautiful sunflower bouquet. Lee promised to offer another workshop at a future time. He gave us an instruction sheet and permission to print it in the Pioneer this month – you will find it on the backside of this page, and maybe it will help you to create beautiful arrangements, too.

Thank you, Lee!

Quilt Raffle

Three beautiful quilts made by Sue Swayze and Gail Brennan are the prizes for the raffle underway from now until fall. Get your tickets from any of the trustees or council members, \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Give them away as gifts, too!

The quilt drawing will take place on 9/24, to finish off the Porch Party Ice Cream Social, and tickets will still be available for purchase that day.

You can view the quilts in the sanctuary. First winner drawn will pick the first quilt, until all three are chosen. These quilts are absolutely lovely!

Thank you, Greg Gallup

Once again, we give our thanks to Greg Gallup for his hospitality and the beauty of his home and yard, which we enjoyed for our annual Worship on the Lake.

Steve Wilson carted his keyboard and music to the shore and played with us and for all the lake folks who could hear us singing. We shared communion and then fellowship after the service, when we ate lunch together under Greg's white canopy.

Greg grills hotdogs and hamburgers, and others bring salads, side dishes, desserts, and beverages. Plenty to eat and enjoy! We'd hoped to have some time with the Fox Family before they moved to Kentucky, but last minute needs kept them busy, so Wes Swayze took the sheet cake over to them after our service, and they were delighted to receive it.

We always appreciate Greg's generosity and we always remember his parents, Orrin and Marian, each time we worship at his home.

Preble Children's Center

The new Director of the Preble Children's Center is Siobhan Kelly (pronounced "Shavonne"), and she will give us a bio for the Pioneer, so we can get to know her better. She already shows lots of enthusiasm for her new position and the children, and is working to forward the interests of the PCC.

Siobhan is active in her church and knows the possibilities for a healthy connection between our church and the day care. We look forward to what the future holds under her leadership.

From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere.
(*Guess Who Wrote This*)

Preble Children's Center News

When David Canfield moved on to a different job, the PCC hired Siobhan Kelly as its new Director. We asked Siobhan to write a brief bio to introduce herself to our congregation. Her words are below.

Our church day care representatives have been meeting with Siobhan and her staff and Board, not only to get to know one another, but to offer support as they make changes that will create a stronger and more viable Children's Center.

The day care has been a long-time cherished ministry and mission of our church, and we want to encourage them as they move into the future, especially in view of the changes made by the State of New York regarding pre-school and kindergarten placements in public schools.

On the backside of this page is a poster designed and distributed by the PCC to attract families with children. Please read it and share as you can, and thank you!

Hello, my name is Siobhan Kelly and I am the "new" director here at The Preble Children's Center.

All my accomplishments and successes and, yes, even failures in my life, (personally, academically, professionally) led me to the Preble Children's Center. It is a calling I could not deny. I feel like this is where God has placed me, and I take this position very seriously.

I have achieved a Bachelor's degree in Childhood Education, NYS teaching certification in grades 1-6. I hold an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts with a focus in early childhood. I have been a Head Start Preschool teacher, an associate teacher at Bright Horizons in Ithaca (in the infant/toddler wings), a substitute teacher in 4 local school districts grades Pre K- 12, Sunday school teacher at the Virgil United Methodist Church, and onetime director of the Virgil Youth Commission Summer Camp program.

I am a mother of three children and Grandmother of two.

What motivates me? It's your children and my children. I want to make sure that while I am responsible for both, they are experiencing the best childcare, with their safety and wellbeing of the utmost importance.

My love for God and the strength I receive from that love have made everything I do and have done possible.

I look forward to meeting all of you,

Siobhan Kelly

Executive Director
Preble Children's Center



500th Anniversary of the
Protestant Reformation

2017 is a huge year for the Protestant
Reformation!

All of Germany and Lutherans world-wide have been preparing for an influx of thousands of tourists and visitors who want to see where Martin Luther lived, loved, labored, and changed the face of the Christian faith.

In 2013, I visited Germany on a “Lutherland” trip with other New York Conference travelers, sponsored by our Evangelical Kirche (Church) partners. The trip led to a much greater understanding of what Luther’s thoughts and actions meant to our way of faith.

Germany’s churches and other places connected to Luther are national treasures, supported in large part by the government. By 2013, efforts were well underway to spruce up and maintain these structures to prepare for the anniversary year, at a cost of millions of Euros.

But the astronomical cost is well worth it – the structures and places are important to world heritage, and incredibly beautiful.

Our church has purchased fifteen books, newly-published, about the Reformation, written in a series of chapters by the UCC Writers Group. There are four sections with 2 or 3 sections each. I will be using some of the material during worship on upcoming Sundays. (See next column.)

If you would like one of the books, or want to study the book with others, please let me know. It’s well worth our time to grow our understanding of the events that led up to the Protestant Reformation.

~ Pastor Becky

Life delights in Life.

~William Blake~

Excerpt from the Book....

The Protestant Reformation began 500 years ago. Some of the life-threatening, flabbergasting ideas that exploded out of these years are now a part of the air we breathe. 500 years ago, people died for them.

But time turns the revolutionary into the everyday. We take key Reformation claims for granted. We can’t even see them, they’re just a part of who we are.

Other Reformation claims are covered in dust, obscured and stuck away in a neglected corner of the church, like a long-forgotten Van Gogh languishing under wraps in someone’s attic.

This study guide celebrates the United Church of Christ’s Reformation heritage by lifting up some of the Reformation’s central claims. There is beauty here. And ugliness, too. Inasmuch as ideas can thrill, these ideas are thrilling. Brace yourself!

Matt Fitzgerald, for the Stillspeaking Writers’ Group

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Here are some symbols of events that happened during and as a result of the Reformation.

*Do you know what these pictures mean to the development of our Protestant faith?*

## UCC Daily Devotional

### **Wisdom, Like**

*Mary Luti, August 7, 2017*

There's wisdom that comes with growing old. I know, because I'm doing it, and I do think I'm wiser about some things now.

Like the fact that nothing lasts: not your waistline or your hairline or your bottom line or your brother's really bad marriage.

Like how it's best to deal with things directly and soon: nothing important solves itself by neglect. Like things not being a worth substitute for love.

Like you can't really do everything.

But age doesn't guarantee wisdom, especially when it comes to the ego. Mine still thinks it's the center of the universe, and more or less in charge of it. Still thinks it knows what's best. Still feels certain of its opinions. Still needs you to share them with. Still bristles when contradicted. Still thinks it has (or can Google) an answer to everything.

All of which is laughable and demonstrably false, and which I know to be so in fleeting moments.

Like when I step out under the vast sky at night. Like when I wake up in the week hours and understand that I will die, sooner now than ever. Like when I'm sitting by the lake in the sharpness of dawn, and a moose comes crashing through the woods, wades out knee-deep, and stands stock still for what seems like hours, majestically alive without my aid.

Like when I open my mouth to sing the hymn and all that emerges is a choke of tears.

### **Prayer**

No one is like you. Teach me that, and I will be wise.

## News from the Endowment Fund

As of today, we are about \$14,000 away from meeting our ultimate goal of \$100,000 as the foundation of the Endowment Fund, which was set up in 1993 by committed church members.

The "push" is on to meet \$14,000 by year end, because this fund is important to our church. Once we reach our goal, we can use accrued interest for other purposes.

Many of us remember the church in our wills, but sometimes making the donation while we are still living is a good idea. One popular reason for donating to this fund is to remember a loved one!

If you would like to know more about the Endowment Fund and why it is helpful to the church, please contact Lee Benson, our minister Becky West, or the Endowment Committee.

It will be great to tell the founder of the fund, Bill Winslow, that we made our goal!

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### Adult Bible Study

Time to resume Adult Bible study after our summer recess!

We will begin with a study of Acts and Romans, to learn how the church developed following the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We have much to learn about this exciting period in the history of the Christian church, because what the early church faced, we face, too.

Everyone who is interested is invited to join this study and discussion group.

We meet in the sofa area outside the church office, and will gather for the first session on the Tuesday of the week following Labor Day, September 12<sup>th</sup>.

From the Trustees:

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

**INCOME**

July Income: \$21,313.30

Year to Date: \$69,891.59 (Includes  
\$16,043.65 contributions for the  
Porch)

**EXPENSES**

July Expense: \$4,493.49

Year to Date: \$60,252.33 ( Includes  
\$13,000 down payment for porch)

July Net Income : \$16,819.81

Year to Date Net income: \$9,639.26

**September Celebrations**

**September 3: Donna Swayze**

**10: Lee Benson**

**14: Jeanne Underwood**

**17: Cullen Waffner**

**Jeffrey Van Patten**

**18: Margaret and Eric Shirley**  
**(Anniversary)**

**23: Burdette Swayze**

**Jordan Lieber**

**27: Stephen Swayze**

**28: Jan Jeffers**

**Jean Henderson**

**30: Linda Underwood**

**Alan Masters**

Dear Friends of Preble Congregational Church,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$429 to CWS  
Blanket and Tools!

> Your gift provides warmth and comfort to  
neighbors in need around the corner and around  
the world. We appreciate your generosity!

> In peace,

> Erin Luchenliu, CWS

Our youth like to reach out and help others.

They have been discussing how they might help the  
Preble Children's Center by bringing some needed  
supplies. They are active in promoting the Heifer  
Project to supply fish to families to raise for food.

Recently they have been working on a special  
surprise to promote the **HARVEST of Faith** fund  
raiser. As we are nearing the end of this drive we  
hope you can support the **Harvest of Faith**.

Just return your brightly colored envelope to  
church with your donation.

**THANKS TO OUR YOUTH FOR ALL THEY DO!!!**

Congratulations to all the young folks who will begin or continue  
their “jobs” of going to school this month!  
*We are proud of you and support your efforts.*

*And thank you to all who help to make this happen: parents, teachers, bus drivers,  
principals, aides, food workers, custodians – everyone who has a hand in educating  
our children.*

*Have a great experience at school this year!*