

St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 34, Issue 6

June, 2011

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

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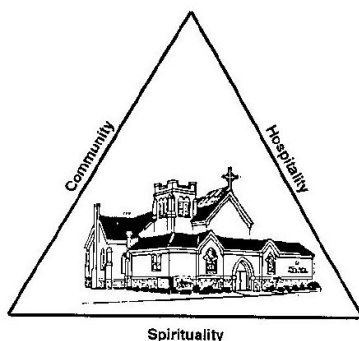
espcoffice@embarqmail.com

Rev. Ruth Solo

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Dear Friends,

I opened up my Bible today to Matthew and my eyes fell upon verses out of the Sermon on the Mount: "You are salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Salt and light. As the days lengthen, light is with us into the evening, and in just one month, it will be close to 10 PM before the light is gone from the day and night sets in. As I think of picnics and summer foods, I think of the salt that I used to put on them to enhance the flavor of the watermelon, the hamburgers, the corn on the cob and the fresh tomatoes. Like many of you, I no longer can eat so much salt. But we can **be** salt. And even as the days begin to fade after June 21, we can also be light to the world.

Salt enhances flavor and light gives life. There are plenty of opportunities to offer the life giving light of Christ and enhance the lives of others during the summer months. Many of us will go for family reunions, vacations, and extended visits. We will sit on our porches and in our back yards. We will go fishing, golfing, playing tennis, and shopping. We will venture to amusement parks, zoos, monuments, and museums. As we go, in our everyday lives, we can let Christ's light shine forth, and we can offer encouragement, a friendly smile, sincere warmth, and even an invitation to join us in church at our source of the light that shines from us.

Have a safe and light giving summer, salted with the love and grace of Christ.



See you in church,
Pastor Ruth Solo

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PASTORS SCHEDULE FOR JUNE:

West Ohio Conference: June 5-9 at Lakeside, OH. Pastor will leave after church on June 5, and return to Elida June 11.

Lakeside 4 Youth: June 24-25. Pastor will accompany community youth from the ministerial association for a visit to the annual Lakeside event.

Thought for the Month:

Going to church doesn't
make you a Christian
any more than standing
in a garage makes
you a car.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to a College Graduate

ZACK WHITE received a Master's Degree in Exercise Science from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida on May 7, 2011. Zack has also attained his Strength and Conditioning Certification. He is now actively seeking employment and will also continue to do an additional internship as an Athletic Trainer at the University of Tampa. Zack and his wife, Katie, live at 913 Balaye Ridge Circle #203, Tampa, FL 33619. Zack is the son of Marty and Kathy White, 5756 Clover Ridge, Elida, OH 45807.



Graduation Open House
 Who: Michele Theodore
 When: Saturday, June 11; 2-5 PM
 Where: 3472 Providence Circle

Graduation Open House
 Who: Tahler Sdao
 When: Saturday, June 11; 4-7 PM
 Where: 1657 Robin Hood Dr.

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's



Praise for the morning...

Pastor Ruth 's official day off is Friday. If you have a need to reach her please call her on her cell phone. #419-812-3032



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Pianist:	Lois Cook
Youth Director:	Corinne Piper
Custodian:	Dave Decker

IF IT'S AUGUST, IT'S TIME TO SET ALLEN COUNTY FAIR CHAIRS!

Please join us for this annual church wide fund raising event **Sunday, August 21** immediately following the morning's church service. There will not be any chairs set on the track or infield for Saturday's concert August 20; consequently, we will set and takedown concert seating on the track as part of the Sunday concert only. This is a great opportunity to raise substantial funds all in one day's work! Hope to see you at the Fair for fun, fellowship, and fund raising on August 21. More details to follow.



SUMMER WORSHIP TIME

by Pastor Ruth Solo

I want to apologize for the article in the last newsletter saying that worship time will not change for the summer. I had erroneously thought that it was the pastor's call to set the time for worship. However, in a discussion at Administrative Council on May 9, it was decided that the worship time will change to **10:00 am beginning June 5**, and stay at that time when fall comes.

It is important for us to be sensitive to those who are unable to be in church at too early a time because of little ones to get ready or because of difficulty in getting around in the mornings. Studies have shown that the mid-morning time for worship is a good answer to the concerns of those who need more time to prepare and for those who feel the church heats up too much for a later time. Families with young children looking for a place to worship are more likely to seek a church where they can have time to get the little ones ready, yet time in the day to get them to their activities.

The Administrative Council will assess how this new time is working at the end of this calendar year. Thank you for your feed back.



EDITOR'S 'Oops'

In the May, 2011 edition of *St. Paul's Epistle*, a piece of the 'St. Paul's Missions Activities' article read: ".....anyone call 9-1-1?" with reference to the St. Paul's handicap ramp builders digging out a portion of front lawn during their construction work in Lima on April 9, 2011. This statement should have read: "....anyone call **8-1-1**?" April was National Safe Digging Month. Anyone digging or pounding the earth in the installation of a mailbox, landscape/trees, basketball backboard pole, graduation party tent stakes, or backyard deck supports, to name a few, must dial **8-1-1** to register their excavation activity. The call is free, easy, and it's the law. Jeff Reiff, Marty White, and Susan Nartker work for utility companies in our area (Dominion East Ohio, Buckeye Pipe Line Co., L.P., and AEP, respectively). A call to **8-1-1** alerts all underground utility operators of pending excavation work and enables utility personnel to mark the approximate location of their facilities so that no damages occur during any disturbance of the earth over or near the utility. Lima has had its share of excavation accidents over the years (remember the explosion that destroyed the Tuttle Construction Company's office building near L.C.C. High School a few years ago?) One call to **8-1-1** before digging can keep everyone safe and financially sound! And now you know.....!



Newsletter
deadline:
the **16th**
of each month

The Heart of Church

RECENT ReFOCUS TEAM EVENTS

Following the St. Paul's ReFocus Team's formal presentation to the congregation prior to the Sunday, April 10, 2011, service, the Team has met every Tuesday evening in order to prepare and finalize a Mission Plan for St. Paul's as determined by the participants of the three ReFocus Summit meetings January-March, 2011. Plans were also made for the Team's Leadership Retreat on May 14, 2011; however, springtime activities seem to have dominated many people's schedules and the Retreat was postponed to a date and time when a majority of Administrative Council members and other interested participants can engage in Leadership discussions and Mission Plan issues.

A Mission Plan to guide our congregation's future ministry work is in final draft form. View it on-line at www.elidastpaulschurch.org The timeline for implementation of St. Paul's mission plan as finalized during the re-scheduled Leadership meeting is:

A special charge conference will be convened by June 30, 2011;

July-August, 2011 – Administrative Council implementation of new Ministry Structure model;

September 30, 2011 – The people of St. Paul's move forward with a new focus and vision for ministry throughout the Elida community.

Just as the re-furbished fellowship hall or new roof or choir cantatas represented exciting times for our congregation over the years, so, too, is this ReFocus effort and the ensuing new Mission Plan for implementation of focused ministry efforts in and around Elida. We believe you will find mission and worship at St. Paul's an exciting endeavor as we face the challenges and opportunities which await us in the days and months ahead.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Your Missions Committee met May 17, 2011:

Thank you to Bill McKinney and Carole and Denny Grapner for representing St. Paul's on the fifth Friday in April at Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen in Lima; The Committee agreed to sponsor a hole for \$100 at the 4th Annual Brad Joseph Memorial Golf Tournament July 23, 2011, at Colonial Golfers Club near Allen East H.S.;

New opportunities are being researched as summer mission work-weeks to replace the United Methodist Children's Home work week of the past three years. A local mission work week here in Lima during mid-July seems the most favorable thus far;

MISSION GIVING AT ST. PAUL'S TO DATE –

Coins for Communion

Jan – **Hope Visitation Center**, Lima, \$ 89.26;

Feb – **Heartbeat of Lima**, \$ 49.08;

Mar – **Our Daily Bread**, Lima, \$ 59.77;

Apr – **5 Loaves Food Pantry**, Lima, \$ 77.96;

May – **U.M.C.H.**, ??

Heifer Sunday School Project: Sent \$411.62 for 2010 in January, 2011; thus far in 2011 \$102.75;

Designated giving to **Ramps 'n Roofs** 2011: \$ 15; Current balance in this account: \$ 1,079.57;

Designated giving to **Missions** in 2011: \$ 20; Current balance in this account: \$ 299.00;

2011 Easter Offering: Conference Miracle Offering - \$ 323.00; ACTS 434, Lima - \$ 323.00;

Special Sunday Offerings

Human Relations Sunday – Jan. 16: \$ 73.00

U.M.C.H. \$5 on the 5th Sunday, Jan. 30: \$ 138.00

Ash Wednesday collection – St. Paul's Special Needs Fund: \$ 37.00

Pacific Emergency UMCOR collection - \$ 275.00 plus \$265 designated from Missions Committee/Fund - \$ 265 for total contribution of \$ 540.00

Meals 'Til Monday - \$ 28.00

UMCOR/One Great Hour of Sharing - \$ 181.00

Mailed Jan. 6, 2011, \$ 8 for 2010 **school kit** project; Jan. 8, 2011, \$ 27 for **World Wide Communion** Sunday 2010.

L.A.M.M. BREAKFAST HELD AT TRINITY UMC:

The quarterly Lima Area Methodist Men's (LAMM) breakfast was held on May 7th at Trinity UMC in Lima.

Bryan Bucher, Pastor at Shawnee UMC presented a program on Haiti missions being organized by the United Methodist Church and by Shawnee UMC. His program, "Plans for future UMCOR trips to Haiti" addressed the great need that exists in Haiti and how other churches and individuals could "piggyback" with a mission trip to Haiti that is already planned. If anyone at St. Paul's UMC church is interested in participating in a mission trip to Haiti, contact Pastor Ruth or Marty White, our mission committee chair.

The Business of Church

ANOTHER KOINONIA CHICKEN BAR-B-QUE COME AND GONE!

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, the St. Paul's "Koinonia Class" held its 39th annual Chicken Bar-B-Que in the church fellowship hall. O.K., maybe not the '39th annual' but have you ever lived through April at St. Paul's without attending this fund raising event? "Koinonia Class" is also mentioned in quotations as our application for sanctioning as a formal St. Paul's small group has not yet been processed. Formal or informal, this group of longstanding members just seems to congregate in the fellowship hall one Friday night every April to make potato salad and prepare for a fund raising meal the next evening....force of habit one might say!

This year the group raised **\$1,123.00** for the church's general fund. Many thanks to ticket sellers extraordinaire **Mary Grigsby and Jamie and Jan Wyant**. It appeared many people passing through the serving line either were employed at Elida Local Schools or were wearing Avon products. Replacing champion ticket seller **Mary Steiner** this year was a formidable task but, as usual, the group pulled the proverbial rabbit from the hat...er...perhaps more like maybe the chicken from the coup....in selling most of the **375 chicken halves** ordered from Harlan's company. Thank goodness, too, as we had a chicken outfit on standby just in case we needed to drum up last minute business up and down the streets of the Village! At one point during the meal, nearly every seat was taken in the fellowship hall – now we're talkin'!

The following morning after Sunday service the group was able to hawk (I thought these were chickens?) nearly all leftover items to cap a successful fellowship and fund raising event for St. Paul's. If you're not busy next April, join in....we'll be hanging out making potato salad some Friday evening and tossing Harlan's chickens to anyone within the Village limits!



Father's Day

Book of Timothy



Committee Chairs

PPR Chair	Linda Craft
Trustees Chair	Tim Theodore
Finance Chair	Art Holman
Physical Plant Chair	Ron Steiner
Treasurer	Gene Craft
Assistant Treasurer	Jenessa Fletcher
Education Chair	TBA
Administrative Council Chair	Scott Fessler
Worship	Ruth Solo
Nurture	Martha Vazquez
Stewardship	Tim Piper
Missions	Marty White, Maedene Holmes

Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:	
May 1, 2011	70
May 8, 2011	89
May 15, 2011	65
May 22, 2011	98

Financial Giving
Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$3,466.00.00

Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
May 1, 2011	\$3,777.00	\$606.63
May 8, 2011	\$3,317.00	\$523.85
May 15, 2011	\$2,609.00	\$354.00
May 22, 2011	\$2,715.75	\$369.00

Greeters	
May 29, 2011	Ruth Hardy & Maedene Holmes
June 5, 2011	Open
June 12, 2011	Don & Judy Chaffins
June 19, 2011	Steve & Tracy Sdao
June 26, 2011	Open



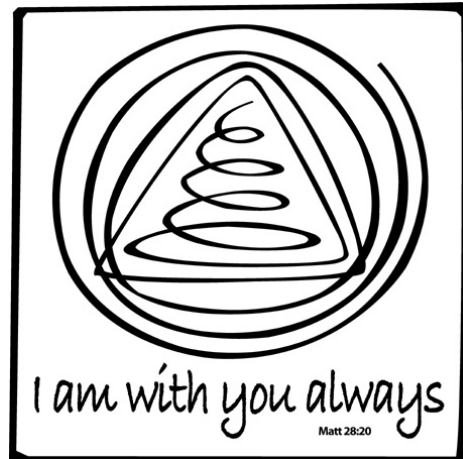
There will be no
Children's
Ministry for the
summer.

Children's Ministry Attendance	
May 1, 2011	N/A
May 8, 2011	6
May 15, 2011	4

Flowers:	
May 29,2011	Rich & Ruth Solo
June 5, 2011	Marty & Kathy White
June 12, 2011	Don & Judy Chaffins
June 19,2011	Greg & Barb Schade
June 26, 2011	Ruth Burgoon

**Visit The United
Methodist Website at:
www.umw.org**

Consulting the Manual



Bible Readings for
Revised Common Lectionary
Year A

Week of June 5
Ascension Sunday
 Color: white or Gold
Old Testament:
 Psalm 47
New Testament:
 Acts 1:1-11
 Ephesians 1:15-23
 Luke 24:44-53

Week of June 12
Pentecost
 Color: Red
Old Testament:
 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
New Testament:
 Acts 2:1-21
 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
 John 20:19-23



Week of June 19

Trinity Sunday
 Color: White
Old Testament:
 Genesis 1:1-2:4a
 Psalm 8
New Testament:
 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
 Matthew 28:16-20

Week of June 26
Second Sunday After Pentecost

Color: Green
Old Testament:
 Genesis 22:1-14
 Psalm 13
New Testament:
 Romans 6:12-23
 Matthew 10:40-42

For more detailed information on the
 Revised Common Lectionary,
 please visit:
www.gbod.org



THE BRADLEY W. JOSEPH MEMORIAL FUND

4th Annual Golf Outing

PROCEEDS SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UNITED METHODIST MEDICAL MISSIONS FOR PHARMACY STUDENTS.

PAST RECEIPIENTS INCLUDE:

REBECCA CAREY (KENYA)



KELLY HITESHEW (UGANDA)



ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:

AWARD LUNCHEON & CEREMONY

GOODY BAGS

TEAM PRIZES

18 HOLES OF GOLF WITH CART

SHOT GUN START

FOUR PERSON SCRAMBLE

EVENT LOCATION:

COLONIAL GOLFERS CLUB

10985 HARDING HIGHWAY

HARROD, OH 45850

419-649-3350

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

SATURDAY, JULY 23, 2011

TEE TIME: 9:00AM

HOT DOGS @ THE TURN

GAMES/CONTESTS ALL DAY

SEND PAYMENT & REGISTRATION TO:

JOHN FLEMING

PO Box 819

GARDEN CITY, MI 48136

GOLF FEES:

REGISTRATION - \$45 PER GOLFER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JOHN FLEMING AT ~~734-604-0227~~ OR JOHN@FLEMINGFINANCIALSVCS.COM

PICTURES FROM PREVIOUS OUTINGS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.FLEMINGFINANCIALSVCS.COM

PLAYER 1: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PLAYER 3: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

REGISTRATION: \$45 PER GOLFER
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JULY 9TH

PLAYER 2: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PLAYER 4: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

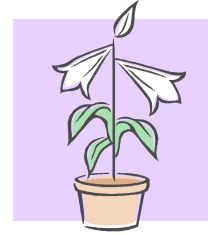
ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Scenes of Easter



Welcome to St. Paul's UMC



**Chancel Choir singing
"A Never-ending Alleluia
By B. Adams**



Remember When...



Joy Singers—1978
Virginia Furry—Director
Lois Cook—Pianist



Vacation Bible School
June, 1985



Groundbreaking Ceremony
June, 1987



Connecting With ...



The small group, Crafty Creatures, pose with the lap quilts they are making for shut-ins and nursing homes. This group meets each Wednesday evening. Pictured L-R: Lavonne Segovia, Joanna Hurd, Linda Matlock, Mary Steiner, Shirley Moser, Gail Fessler, Mary Irvin, Phyllis Trigg, Margie Best, Jone Lane, Cindy Guess. Absent: Carole Grapner



Congratulations to **Jenni Theodore** on her engagement to **Zac Jankovsky**. On April 30, 2011. Jenni Theodore and Zac Jankovsky have announced plans for a June 30, 2012 wedding. Jenni graduates from OSU next month, then will continue her studies at OSU for a Doctorate in Pharmacy. Zac will graduate from Bradley University in Peoria Ill. next year, then plans to pursue his Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering. Jenni and Zac first met at Lakeside church camp. Parents are Sue and Tim Theodore and Cindy and Charlie Jankovsky of Bath.

Remember in Prayer



Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Homebound Members

- Hazel Dunn
- Edna Osman
- Jean Redd
- Gladys Sherrick

Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

- Don Chaffins
- Dottie Foster
- Joanna Hurd
- Rodney Lee
- Rick Scholfield

In the Military & Missions

- Lesley Parker
- Jason Stanley



Congratulations to **Jonathan Cook** on his engagement to **Elizabeth Hess** of Cincinnati. Both are graduates of Ohio Northern University. Jonathan presently works for Rudolph Foods in Westminster. Elizabeth is a pharmacist for Rite-Aid Drug Stores. They are planning a May 5, 2012 wedding.

Visit The United Methodist Communications website : www.umcom.org

This website offers book reviews, music reviews, and web ministry information among other relevant and interesting links.

The People of St. Paul's



St. Paul's UMC,
Your church continues to be a blessing to our organization!

Thank you for your recent donation. Over 190 students are now receiving weekend meals in Elida, Perry and Bath. Your partnership has played a role in that, and we are sincerely grateful!

Many blessings to you all!

Joe & Jenny Earl
Meals 'til Monday

Thanks for all the beautiful cards and flowers I received from everyone. My recovery has been made easier thru your prayers and kindness. I hope to see you all in the very near future.

Sincerely,
Dottie Foster

Thank you, Pastor Ruth for your many visits to the hospital and all your prayers. Thank you for the beautiful flowers.

We were all so inspired from your blessed service for Gary and our family. Thanks for the wonderful meal the church put on for my family and friends.

We all were so truly blessed.
The Family of Gary Johnson



In Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to the family of Eileen Slade. Eileen passed away on Thursday, May 12, 2011 at the age of 85 years. Rev. Ruth Solo officiated at her funeral, which was held at the church on Monday, May 16. Eileen became a member of St. Paul's UMC on December 16, 1962.

St. Paul's UMC Members & Friends,

Thank you so much for the gifts I received for helping out with directing the choir. It was truly a blessing for me and I enjoyed it very much. The job was very easy, as we are blessed with a very talented choir.

Myrna Metzger

Pastor Ruth, PPR, and People of St. Paul's,

Thank you very much for the flowers and gift card I received on choir recognition Sunday. I appreciate the gifts as well as the kind words spoken. Our church is very blessed to have such a faithful choir. It takes all of us doing our part to see that St. Paul's music ministry continues to thrive. It is a blessing to be a part of this group of caring people. Many thanks,

Lois Cook

Thank you again. Everything looked great, and the church did a marvelous job on everything for our family.

Scott, Mark and Clark Slade

Meetings

TBA
PPR

June 1, 2011
Stewardship .7:00 PM

June 2, 2011
Worship Team..6:00 PM

June 7, 2011
Trustees...7:00 PM

June 13, 2011
Finance...7:00 PM

No Ad Council

June 21, 2011
Missions...7:00 PM

Sundays
Prayer...9:30 AM
Fellowship...9:30AM
Worship...10:00 AM

June 2011

May 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Becky Bean	2	3 Maureen Rentz	4 Lois Rabley
				Worship Team		
5 Jon Blewitt	6 Ruth Shaw	7	8	9 David Nartker Jamie Wyant	10 Don Chaffins Susan Nartker	11
		Trustees				
12	13	14 Rick Evans Evan Motzer	15 Jim Hines Mallory Rentz	16 Judy Chaffins	17 Gwyneth Woeller	18
	Finance					
19	20 Greg Schade	21 Steve Moser Josh Motzer	22 Kim Metzger Emma Motzer	23	24 Vicki McAdams	25
		Missions				
26 Art Holman	27	28 Linda Matlock	29	30		

Anniversaries

- Marty & Kathy White
June 2
- Bill & Esther McKinney
June 5
- Brad & Slone Whetstone
June 13
- Art & Linda Holman
June 17
44 yrs.
- Jeff & Kim Holmes
June 21
- Don & Judy Chaffins
June 29
- John & Jone Lane
June 30
49 yrs.

July 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Featured Recipes from St. Paul's Cookbook

Chocolate Pudding Dessert

by Linda Matlock

Ingredients		Instructions
2 cup	Graham Cracker Crumbs	In a small bowl combine graham cracker crumbs and sugar. Add melted margarine. Toss until combined. Press into 13x9x2" baking pan.
1/4 cup	Sugar	
1/2 cup	Margarine (melted)	In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese, powdered sugar and cool whip until fluffy. Spread over graham cracker crust. Chill.
1-8 oz. Pkg.	Cream Cheese	
1 cup	Powdered Sugar	Mix 2 packages chocolate pudding with 3 cups milk. Beat until thick, about 2 minutes. Spread over cream cheese mixture. Refrigerate.
1-8 oz. tub	Cool Whip	
2 sm. pkgs.	Chocolate instant pudding (or any pudding flavor)	May top with more cool whip if desired.
3 cup	Milk	Keep refrigerated



Sloppy Joes

by Winifred Gratz

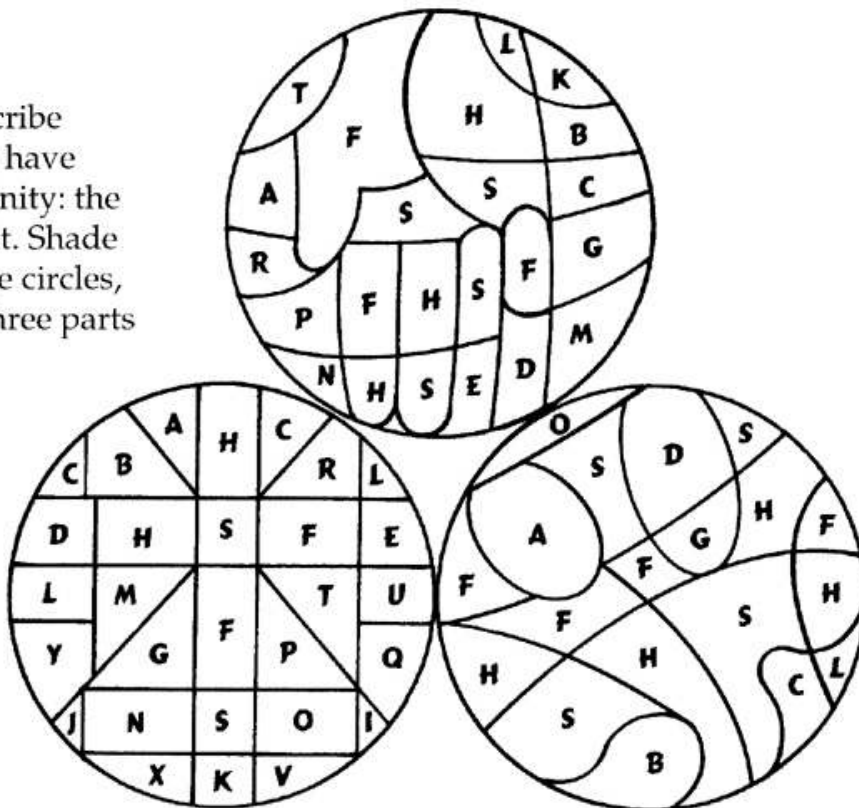
Ingredients		Instructions	50 Servings
7 lb.	Ground Beef	Mix together and cook until done.	
1/3 cup	Dried Onions		
2 cups	Cooked Celery		
1/2 cup	Brown Sugar		
1/4 cup	Mustard		
1/4 cup	Vinegar		
1/4 cup	Worcestershire Sauce		
5 cups	Ketchup		
to taste	Salt & Pepper		
to thicken	Bread crumbs		



KIDZ KORNER

The Holy Trinity

God is wonderful and hard to describe in just a few words. We Christians have come to know God as the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Shade in all the F, S, and H letters in these circles, and you will see symbols for the three parts of the Holy Trinity.

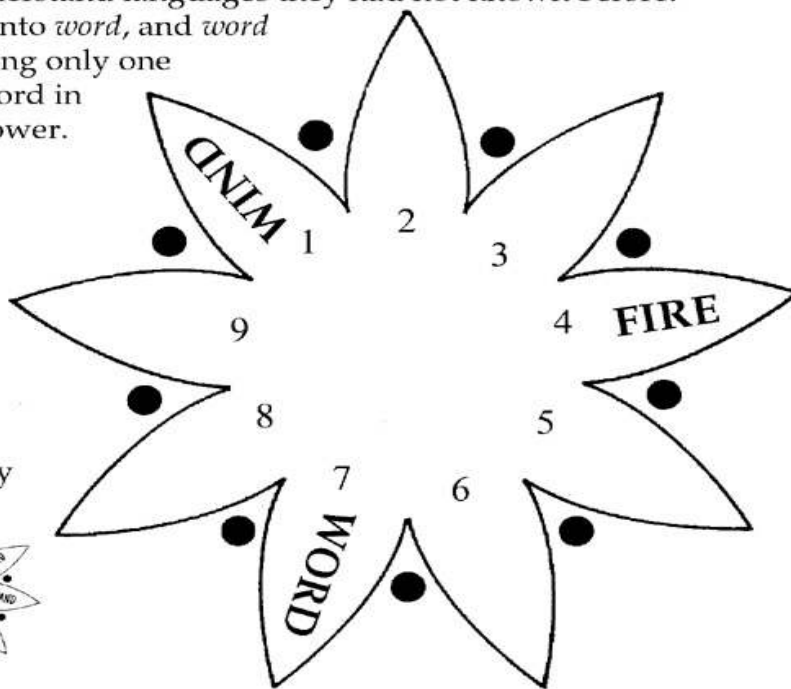


Three Little Words

On the Day of Pentecost people were filled with the Holy Spirit and were changed. They heard a sound like the rush of a mighty wind and something like tongues of fire appeared. The people were able to speak and understand languages they had not known before.

Change the word *wind* into *fire*, *fire* into *word*, and *word* into *wind* by moving clockwise (changing only one letter at a time) and writing the new word in the blank spaces on the petals of the flower. Below is a list of clues.

1. **WIND**
2. a grape drink
3. very thin or very nice
4. **FIRE**
5. metal thread
6. She _____ a hat
7. **WORD**
8. a long room in a hospital with many beds
9. a magic stick



St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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Elida, OH 45807

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www.elidastpaulschurch.org

June 2011



Living Our Faith



Door of Fear/ Door of Adventure

My grandparents had a third floor in their spacious house. A door with a stairway led up to heaven knows what! As small children, my brother and I would sneak up to that door, dare each other to open it, slowly peer to the top of the stairs, and then run like the wind for Grandmother's lap in the kitchen.

In John 20:19 we read that the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear when Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

One of the fundamental lessons of faith is that we need not fear. Jesus comes among us and grants us peace. We are not alone; the Holy Spirit is with us. The doors that are in front of us don't have to be locked for fear. They have been consecrated, in a way. Christ has turned them into portals to spiritual adventure. We may have a hard time believing that in a way that affects our behavior. We, like the disciples, need not only to be empowered with the Spirit of God, but shooed out of the house to get going on our way!

In the moment that Christ comes to the disciples and says, "Peace be with you," their defenses breached, their guard was let down, and they knew it would be okay. In the same way, with the Holy Spirit given to us by the risen Christ, our doors of fear can be transformed into portals to spiritual adventure. A future we could not have imagined can emerge before us. We are not alone; the Holy Spirit is with us.

Charles T. Rush, Jr.
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