

# The Courier



APRIL 2024



Church of Christ Uniting Kingston PA



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The content of **The Courier** is only as good as your submissions. Articles and pictures must be received by Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> at: [thecourier@cocu4u.org](mailto:thecourier@cocu4u.org) for inclusion in the May 2024 issue. Thanks!

Editor: Curt Schwarzwaldner

## COCU CHILDREN'S TIME WITH GUEST CONFIRMANDS



Children's time on March 17<sup>th</sup> included the Confirmation class from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Kingston.

-Photo: Barbara Swanson

## COCU YOUTH AWARDED FOR ARTWORK



Congratulations to Abby Pawlowski who has three pieces of art displayed in the Schulman Gallery at Luzerne County Community College. One of Abby's pieces earned the George & Pearl Fillman Memorial Award. Abby's art is part of the Suzanne Maria Rossetti Memorial Art Contest Winner's Exhibit. This exhibit runs through April 10<sup>th</sup>.

-Photos: Matt Pawlowski

## MISSION / OUTREACH TEAM PROVIDES COMMUNITY MEALS



...to the Kingston Police Department on January 15<sup>th</sup> and Ruth's Place homeless shelter for women on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Next: Teacher Appreciation Week in May for teachers of Chester Street Elementary. Pictured Right: Cheryl Fuller, Shelby from Ruth's Place, and Karen Whipple.

-Photos: Betsy Jones

**The Courier** is free via email - \$10 per year donation requested for print edition

COCU Online: [YouTube channel](#) - [webpage](#) - [Facebook page](#)

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Easter People:



On March 31st, we celebrated Resurrection Sunday. What a grand and glorious day that was. But Easter doesn't end on March 31st. The Easter season continues through the month of April and ends with the Ascension of Jesus on May 12th. There is a lot of time to celebrate and give thanks for our salvation and the gift of eternal life. It is beyond comprehension that Jesus died in our place. He took upon himself the Father's wrath, the sins of all of us. Jesus laid down his life voluntarily. By faith in Christ we have life forevermore.

But what if this good news of God's redeeming love never happened? Without Easter, Good Friday would just be another Friday. It is Jesus's resurrection that secures our resurrection. Today we call Good Friday good because of Mary Magdalene's announcement to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord." Without Mary's announcement, Friday and Sunday wouldn't mean anything.

There would be no gospel for me to preach. There would be no good news to share. There would be no reason to believe in a dead Savior. A dead Jesus wouldn't have redeemed any of us. If we deny the resurrection then Mary was a liar. Jesus himself would have been the top liar for he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." If Jesus isn't the resurrection and the life, then there would be no need for us to do mission work or share from our hearts. People who think we are already wasting our time, energy and money would be right. Christianity would be a myth. We would be enslaved to sin with no hope of redemption.

Praise God, that is not the end of the story! We serve a risen Savior. A Messiah who could not be kept on a cross or in a tomb. Since Jesus has come out of the grave, death is swallowed in victory! "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said." (Matthew 28:6).

We can't have Good Friday without Easter Sunday and we can't have Easter Sunday without Good Friday. Alleluia! Christ is risen! "Ev'ry morning is Easter morning from now on. Ev'ry day's resurrection day. The past is over and done. Good-bye guilt, goodbye fear. Good riddance. Hello Lord hello sun. I am one of the Easter people. God's in charge spread the word. Yesterday I was bored and lonely. But today look and see. I belong to the Easter people. Life's exciting to me. Ev'ry morning is Easter morning. Ev'ry morning is Easter morning. Ev'ry morning is Easter morning. From now on." (Authors Richard Avery and Donald Marsh) May we truly be Easter people who raise our voices and share our good news with others! -Pastor Jane

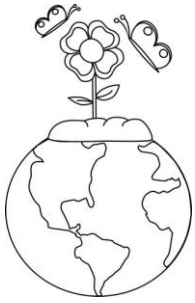


**COMMUNION-** Beginning on April 7<sup>th</sup>, we will serve communion in the pews. This is that method of serving communion with the cubes of bread and the small juice cups. You will remain in the pews; the communion servers will first pass the bread throughout the sanctuary. Additionally, we will have a communion server with Gluten Free Bread and Juice. That person will walk behind the bread servers and give to those who raise their hand and request gluten free. Those persons wanting gluten free will take both the bread and the juice from the server. When we all have the bread, we will receive the body of Christ together. Secondly, the communion servers will pass the juice cups through the pews. When all have the cup of juice, we will receive the blood of Christ together. We kindly request that all of our worshippers sit on the main floor of the sanctuary on Communion Sundays. Thank You! We will be serving communion in the pews April, May, and June. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Pastor Jane or Michelle Giza.

Notice: The Administrative Team meeting on April 16 has been moved up to 6:30pm.

-Jeff Boerger

## SCRIPTURES FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL



### **Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>- Second Sunday of Easter/Holy Communion-**

Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31.

**Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>- Third Sunday of Easter-** Acts 3:12-19, Psalm 4, 1 John 3:1-7, Luke 24:36b-48.

### **Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>- Fourth Sunday of Easter/Festival of the Creation-**

Acts 4:5-12, Psalm 23, 1 John 3:16-24, John 10:11-18.

**Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>- Fifth Sunday of Easter-** Acts 8:26-40, Psalm 22:25-31, 1 John 4:7-21, John 15:1-8.

## WHAT'S ON THE PRESBYTERIAN CALENDAR?

**April 8- International Roma Day-** Learn about international mission workers addressing the discrimination, poverty, and social separation experienced by the Roma people in Central and Eastern Europe. Search for "Roma" to find stories from our mission workers.

**April 11- Black Maternal/Birthing Health Week Begins-** For information on 'A Resolution on Reproductive Justice; Black Maternal/Birthing People and Infant Mortality' passed by the 225th General Assembly in 2022 go to [pc-biz.org/#/search/3000825](https://pc-biz.org/#/search/3000825).

**April 17- International Day of Farmers' Struggles-** We celebrate the resiliency of smallholder farmers as they struggle for land rights and food sovereignty, visit [pcusa.org/farmers](https://pcusa.org/farmers).

**April 22- Earth Day-** Celebrate God's gift of Creation together. Visit [pcusa.org/earthday](https://pcusa.org/earthday).

**April 24- Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day-** Pray for Christ's followers in the Middle East, for Armenia and for all who suffer persecution. Remember the 1.5 million Armenians killed during World War 1.

Jewish, Islamic & Orthodox Observances: April 9- Ramadan ends, April 22-30- Passover.

**APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH-** It is up to us to know the signs of abuse, to report it, and to protect our community's children. As a community of believers it is our responsibility to pray for those victims whether you know them or not.

**Please take a few moments to pray during the month of April for our Luzerne County children.**

\*Pray that God brings an end to child abuse soon.

\*Pray that our children facing child abuse day in and day out might realize their value and have the courage to speak up.

\*Pray that God will strengthen our families in Luzerne County.

\*Pray for our Parents and Guardians in Luzerne County that they will teach and model good parenting skills.

\*Pray for our children and youth who have come forward in Luzerne County. May they know they are supported and loved as they heal from the wounds of abuse.

\*Pray for strength and stamina for those who investigate such situations.

\*Pray for us as a church that we may follow our Safe Sanctuaries Policy and keep our children and youth as safe as possible.

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. -Ralph Waldo Emerson





**WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY/LUNCH BUNCH-** For the Months of April and May we will be studying two books of the Bible: Malachi and James. The author of Malachi is Malachi which means, "Messenger."

Although the Jews had been allowed to return from exile and rebuild the temple, several discouraging factors brought about general religious apathy. The glorious future announced by the prophets had not yet been realized. The people began to doubt God's covenant love and no longer trusted his justice. The Jews as a community began to lose hope. Because of their hopelessness, the Jews rarely worshiped and they didn't take the law seriously. In response to this, Malachi encourages covenant faithfulness and obedience to the teachings of the law. Only through repentance and reform will the people of the Lord once again experience the Lord's blessings. Malachi tells the people to be faithful to the law of Moses. The day is coming when all the prophets' words will be fulfilled. Be faithful in giving, be faithful in service, the day of the Lord is coming!

The author of James is James. He is most likely the brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem Council. James is one of several brothers of Jesus and is probably the oldest. At first he wasn't sure about his brother, Jesus. James often challenged and misunderstood Jesus, but later he became a very important leader in the life of the Church. Paul called him a pillar in the church in Galatians 2:9. He was martyred in A.D. 62. The emphasis of this book is on transformational Christianity. The book describes good deeds and a genuine faith that is accompanied by a consistent life-style. The book reminds us to be aware of pride, slander, boasting and a quarrelsome attitude. It also teaches patience in suffering.

**Dates for Wednesday Evenings Bible Study: 4/3, 4/10, 4/17, 5/1, 5/8, 5/22.**

**Dates for Lunch Bunch: 4/4, 4/11, 4/18, 4/25, 5/2, 5/9, 5/23.**



**"MARY'S" GROUP April 2024** WE ARE NOW MEETING FOR LUNCH EACH MONTH

Date: Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. Place: Theo's Restaurant – 596 Mercer Ave., Kingston.

Time: 1:00pm for devotions followed by lunch and discussion of chapters 7 & 8 in our Lenten study, "Meeting Jesus at the Table." PLEASE BRING ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW STUDY TO START IN MAY. RSVP: Donna Dickinson 570-696-2539 by Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.  
*Psalm 118- verses 1, 22, 24 "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

**THE WEDNESDAY MORNING PRAYER BREAKFAST GROUP** meets at Ollies Restaurant 84 S. Wyoming Ave. in Edwardsville on **Wednesdays at 8 a.m.**

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each Month (in April it's the 20<sup>th</sup>) at The Scratch Kitchen, 1335 N. River Street, in Plains at 9 a.m. All Men are welcome to attend. If you would like to have more information, please feel free to contact Todd Swanson at 570-762-2887.



**DINNER AND A MOVIE** continues to gather on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm. This month it's April 14<sup>th</sup>. We meet in Fellowship Hall and Lukens Lounge. Enter the church by the Market Street parking lot and Fellowship Hall door (at the ramp.) Those attending are asked to bring a food item to share. Paper products are provided along with drinks. After a time of eating and fellowship we will watch a Christian movie that we choose by consensus from a selection of movies provided.



**RECYCLE YOUR OLD INK CARTRIDGES-** Please bring in and deposit in our recycling box all of your used ink or laser cartridges. We get reward \$\$\$ at Staples monthly with your help and our turn in.

## COCU Calendar - April 2024

| Sun   | Mon   | Tue   | Wed   | Thu   | Fri  | Sat   |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>LOCATIONS:</b><br><b>CR= CONFERENCE ROOM</b><br><b>FH= FELLOWSHIP HALL</b><br><b>LL= LUKENS LOUNGE</b><br><b>S= SANCTUARY</b>    | <b>1</b> Easter Monday<br><br>OFFICE CLOSED                     | <b>2</b><br>9:30AM LECIONARY ZOOM MEETING<br>2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH<br>6PM FRONTIER GIRLS MEETING -FH                                       | <b>3</b><br>8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES<br>12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH<br>6:30PM BIBLE STUDY -LL<br>7PM CHOIR REHERSAL -FH                          | <b>4</b><br>11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL                              | <b>5</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>7</b><br>10AM WORSHIP COMMUNION -S<br>11AM FELLOWSHIP HOUR -FH<br>11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL                                | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b><br>9:30AM LECIONARY ZOOM MEETING<br>1PM MARY'S GROUP -THEO'S RESTAURANT<br>2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH                                  | <b>10</b><br>8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES<br>12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH<br>6:30PM BIBLE STUDY -LL<br>7PM CHOIR REHERSAL -FH, EDUCATION ZOOM MEETING | <b>11</b><br>11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL                             | <b>12</b>  | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>14</b><br>10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL & FAITH SNAPCHAT<br>11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL<br>1:30PM DINNER AND A MOVIE -FH, LL | <b>15</b> Income Tax Due<br>4:15PM STEPHEN MINISTRY -LL OR ZOOM | <b>16</b><br>9:30AM LECIONARY ZOOM MEETING<br>2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH<br>6PM FRONTIER GIRLS MEETING -FH<br>6:30PM ADMINISTRATION MEETING -CR | <b>17</b><br>8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES<br>12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH<br>6:30PM BIBLE STUDY -LL<br>7PM CHOIR REHERSAL -FH                         | <b>18</b><br>11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL<br>7PM PARISH COUNCIL -FH   | <b>19</b>  | <b>20</b><br>9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST -SCRATCH KITCHEN<br>10AM DAR MEETING -LL |
| <b>21</b><br>10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL & FAITH SNAPCHAT<br>11AM FELLOWSHIP HOUR -FH<br>11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL          | <b>22</b> Earth Day<br>5:30PM WOMENS CLUB -FH                   | <b>23</b><br>9:30AM LECIONARY ZOOM MEETING<br>2PM EXERCISE CLASS  | <b>24</b> Admin. Prof. Day<br>8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES<br>12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH<br>7PM CHOIR REHERSAL -FH                                  | <b>25</b><br>11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL<br>12PM MEALS ON WHEELS -CR | <b>26</b> Arbor Day<br>11AM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING -CR | <b>27</b>   |
| <b>28</b><br>10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL & FAITH SNAPCHAT<br>11AM FELLOWSHIP HOUR -FH<br>11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL          | <b>29</b>   | <b>30</b><br>9:30AM LECIONARY ZOOM MEETING<br>1PM STAFF MEETING -CR<br>2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH   |   |   |  |   |

SUNDAY 10AM WORSHIP AVAILABLE IN PERSON OR ONLINE LIVE AND ON DEMAND LATER



**SUMMER CAMP-** Camp season is almost here and we're excited to share that we have expanded our camp scholarship options this year. As always, Camp Lackawanna, Camp Johnsonburg, Sky Lake and the Susquehanna Conference camps are included, but this year we are also adding two day camp options for our younger kids that may not be ready for overnight camp quite yet (or our older kids who do not want to go to overnight camp). The two additions are Camp Orchard Hill in Dallas and Peace Camp that is sponsored by the Peace and Justice Center and is held at First Presbyterian in Wilkes Barre. Member children will be able to use up to \$300 in COCU Camp Scholarship funds to attend the camp or camps of their choice and non-member children will be able to use up to \$200. If you are interested in learning more about camp scholarship options, contact Betsy Jones at [htebazile724@yahoo.com](mailto:htebazile724@yahoo.com) or by phone at 607-215-5382.



**CAMP LACKAWANNA WORK DAY-** Camp Lackawanna is looking for volunteers to help get the camp ready for this season. For 4 weekends in February, groups: painted the bathrooms in Smyrl Lodge, renovated and upgraded the bathrooms in Merrill Lodge, painted benches and tables, among other tasks. There is still work to do: cleaning, painting, splitting wood, spreading wood chips, etc. Two weekends have been designated as work weekends: **April 12-14** and **May 17-19**. We will try to get some workers for one or both Saturdays. If you feel you would like to take a nice drive and can commit to one of these dates, please call the church office, Karen Whipple or Dave Oriel.

**REJUVENATE, A LADIES OF THE LAKE RETREAT** May 3-5, 2024. Register for an upcoming retreat that's sure to brighten your year. Bring a woman friend, a group of friends, or travel by yourself to "Rejuvenate" a Ladies of the Lake Retreat at Sky Lake Camp and Retreat Center in Windsor, New York. Come away and rest awhile as you spend time in the lodge and the forest for a weekend free of the distractions of the outside world. MILD AND WILD: If you're new to Sky Lake, or if you are returning, you are wholeheartedly welcome. Our leadership team is planning a weekend filled with "mild and wild" activities. You might hike in the woods, cozy up by the fire, experience massage therapy, experience a laughter class, spend some creative time designing earrings or pendant, make cheese from scratch, or try a watercolor painting class. You'll set your own pace as you take time in solitude in the great outdoors or take time to join with other women for activities. You'll dine on delicious and healthy meals prepared by our foodservice team. You are invited to journey spiritually with vespers and Bible study led by an experienced, respected ordained minister. THEME: "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." -Prov. 17:22. The theme of our 2024 weekend will be "Let's Play, Find Joy in Each Day". We will dabble in delight as we learn to incorporate happiness into life. We invite you to come relax and lighten your heart at this year's lakeside retreat. HOW TO REGISTER/COST: Register at Sky Lake's website, <https://skylakecenter.org/event/> Cost Is Approximately \$300. Scholarships May Be Available - Contact Sky Lake.

**HOYT COMMUNITY CLOSET-** Our neighbors at the Hoyt Library have asked that we share with you the news of their newly formed Community Cabinet. The mission of their Community Cabinet is to "create a supportive environment in which no young person must grapple with a lack of access to the essential personal care products of adolescence because of financial limitations." Ways to contribute to this project are gifts of money or products. Checks can be made out and sent to the Hoyt Library with the notation that it is meant for the Community Cabinet. Products can be dropped off at the Hoyt Library front desk. Examples of products to be contributed are shampoo, body wash, dental supplies, ChapStick, hand sanitizer, and feminine hygiene supplies. Contributions for this endeavor are welcome and will make a meaningful difference for those in need.



**MISSION/OUTREACH BABY SHOWER-** The Mission and Outreach Ministry Team is supporting families in need throughout the month of April. Our collection will be benefitting Volunteers of America Caring Alternatives program. This program supports families with young children that are struggling to provide these necessities. Donations will be accepted in the Narthex throughout the month of April with the hope of delivering by Mother's Day. If you would

like to make a monetary donation, please indicate "Baby Shower" on the memo of your check. Please see the wish list and once again, thank you for your continued support of this wonderful mission. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Oriel, 570-362-1614.

DIAPERS - FORMULA - BABY FOOD - DIAPER BAGS - BABY CLOTHES - CAR SEATS  
BREASTFEEDING SUPPLIES - CRIB BEDDING - BOTTLES - BIBS - STROLLERS - PACIFIERS  
HYGIENE PRODUCTS - PACK & PLAYS - BATHTUBS - BABY TOYS AND BOOKS - BASSINETS  
FIRST AID SUPPLIES (BABY) - BOUNCERS - SWADDLE BLANKETS - MONITORS



**NEIGHBORS IN NEED PROJECT APRIL 2024-** Each month we ask for certain items. Boxes will be in the narthex & reception office. April collection: Full Size Toothpaste & Deodorant for Men & Women, Childrens' Toothbrushes.



**COCU CLOTHES RACK-** At COCU we are collecting "gently used" clothing of all sizes for women, men and children. There is a cardboard box in the Narthex in which to deposit your contributions. Clothing is sorted, hung on clothes racks, and available during Food Pantry hours on Wednesdays from noon until 2:00 p.m. Thank you for your interest in this project.



**NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS FOR COCU FOOD PANTRY-** Please help keep our pantry stocked. We are accepting the following donations of food items: peanut butter, jelly, mac and cheese, boxed cereal, shelf milk, juices, pasta and sauce, canned meats, canned soup, tuna, mayo, boxed Hamburger, Chicken or Tuna Helper, boxed potatoes, canned fruits and veggies. Please be sure that all food donations *are not* out of date. Monetary donations are also welcomed and checks are payable to **COCU Food Pantry**. Food will be distributed on Wednesdays between 12:00 and 2:00. If you have any questions, please feel free to give Dave or Jan Oriel a call. If you know someone in need, have them call the church office at 570-288-8434. Thank you. The Food Pantry is a church-supported mission to help members of our community.



**MEALS ON WHEELS** at COCU is in need of volunteer drivers to deliver meals throughout the week. They are in need of volunteers especially when the regular drivers go on vacation or are ill. Please contact Amy at 570-288-1023 for more information about being a volunteer driver for MOW. Thanks in advance for your time.



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO FEED DINNERS TO KIDS-** The Ollie's Program, Dinners for Kids, is in need of 2 teams of 2 people to deliver meals to needing children. Two meals to each child of a needing family is delivered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Volunteers are scheduled for the month. You, as a volunteer, are asked what days you are unavailable to deliver the next month. The schedule is made based on when teams are available. You are usually asked to deliver the meals for only two or three times a month. On your day for delivering, you will be picking up the meals at Ollies Restaurant in Edwardsville about 2:30 p.m. again on your Monday, Wednesday or Friday assigned day. The route sheet has the address, the number of children, (two meals are in each bag and each child gets a plastic bag.) There are directions from one home to the next home of the next recipient. See Charlie Dancheck if you have questions and are interested.



**WELCOME OUR NEW MERGER COORDINATOR, KAREN KINNEY** as Merger Coordinator for the Lehigh and Lackawanna Presbyteries. Karen began her work on March 1 on a one-year renewable contract, and will be working remotely from her home in Bangor, PA. Her role is to work with the Transitional Presbytery leader, the merger team, and Presbytery leaders to discern, develop, and implement a proposed plan of merger between

Lackawanna and Lehigh Presbyteries including legal, financial, ecclesiastical, and related matters. She will work to keep both Presbyteries informed regarding where we are in the merger process. Rev. Kinney is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). In 2023 she completed a three-year Designated Pastorate for Christ Presbyterian Church in Bangor, PA. Prior to that she served Glenville Presbyterian Church in Glenville, WV. Ministry is her second career- her first was working 30 years in the nonprofit sector as a grant maker, fundraiser, facilitator, trainer, and consultant. She worked to aid organizations in governance, organizational structure, stewardship and building partnerships including mergers. Karen earned her Master of Divinity Degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. She has two grown children, Jessica and Justin. Karen can be reached for questions about merger matters at 570-348-0643 or at [merger.coordinator@lackawanna.org](mailto:merger.coordinator@lackawanna.org)

### **THREE IMPORTANT UNITED METHODIST 2024 GENERAL CONFERENCE PROPOSALS**

And How You Can Support Our Susquehanna Delegates.

#### **Worldwide Regionalization**

- Restructures UMC based on equity and respect for missional context
- Critical first step toward decolonizing both polity and relationships
- Keeps us connected as a global church
- Creates regional conferences in Africa, Europe, Philippines, U.S.
- Offers autonomy in regional decision-making

#### **Revised Social Principles**

- Proposed by the [General Board of Church and Society](#)
- Collaboration of 4000+ UMs from around the world, across 8 years
- The [proposed revisions](#) are:
  - more succinct
  - more theologically grounded
  - better reflect the nature of the global Church

-They include:

- Removing "The practice of homosexuality is incompatibility with Christian teaching"
- Changing the definition of marriage from "one man and one woman" to "two people"

#### **Remove anti-LGBTQ+ language and policies**

- Goal is to leave the 2024 Book Of Discipline void of any language that targets LGBTQ+ persons
- Honor regionalization and create a blank slate for a new structure and future regional conferences

You are highly encouraged to email the Susquehanna clergy & laity delegates to General Conference. Let them know the name of our church and that we are a merged Methodist and Presbyterian congregation. Tell them you are praying for them. You can also express your hope for the future of the United Methodist Church. Let them know we became a reconciling congregation in 2022. Here is a link to find the listing of our delegates: <https://susumc.org/gc/> and make sure you scroll down to the bottom.

**SUNDAY BULLETIN COVERS-** If you would like to honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate someone's special birthday or anniversary, bulletin covers are available for purchase any Sunday of the year. The cost is \$30. Please call the office at 570-288-8434.





**WHAT IS THE GENERAL CONFERENCE?**- The General Conference is the highest legislative body of the United Methodist Church. General Conference holds the power to revise The Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions while also initiating amendments to the denomination's constitution. General Conference usually meets every 4 years. Any congregation, conference, organization or individual may submit a petition to General Conference to change the Book of Discipline or the Book of Resolutions. Further petitions may also be introduced from the floor by delegates. There is a lot more that could be said about the workings of General Conference, but this gives you a short overview.

**When is the General Conference and Where is it?** General Conference is scheduled for April 23-May 3 at the Convention Center in Charlotte, NC.

**Who Attends General Conference?** Annual Conferences--the denomination's regional bodies consisting of lay and clergy voters from multiple churches--each elect an allotment of delegates. The United Methodist Church's constitution requires that laity elect the lay delegates, and clergy elect their fellow clergy. In the Susquehanna Conference we are entitled to six clergy delegates and six lay delegates. These delegates were elected at the annual conference.

**Let us pray for our Clergy Delegates:** Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver, Rev. Dr. Kathleen E. Kind, Rev. Mark F. Reisinger, Rev. Dr. Gary D. Weaver, Rev. Rachel E. Keller Wong, Rev. Jacob A. Waybright.

**Let us pray for our Laity Delegates:** Christiana McDermott, Dr. Milton Loyer, Toni Oplinger, Cindy Weaver, Lisa Bender.

**NOW HIRING-** The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Supervisory Area is looking for new part-time Administrative Assistant. This vital position is the hub of communications and support for the district and is located in Trucksville, PA. Further details may be found in the [job description](#). Interested parties should submit an [Application](#) & Resume to [scrantonwilkesbarre@susumc.org](mailto:scrantonwilkesbarre@susumc.org).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED- We have a need for volunteers!** Pushing a broom? Running a vacuum? Dusting a few shelves? Between now and the time our new employee begins taking over the custodial duties, we have a need for a few willing people to help with operations at our church. It will involve nothing too strenuous, and will be easier with each pair of hands added to the roster. Interested? Please contact Sherri at our church office (570-288-8434) for more information.

**COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY TEAM-** There is a live streaming sign-up sheet for upcoming services next to the live streaming station in the balcony. If you are interested in helping with live streaming, please check the schedule for available dates to sign up. Contact Kristin Haas if you are in need of a refresher course or training for live streaming.

**VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE-** If you are thinking, "I would like to do the Children's Message," please let Pastor Jane know. It is always good to have different voices in worship to share God's message with our children on a Sunday. Please call either the church office at 570-288-8434 or the cell at 570-396-5883. Thanks in advance for volunteering!!!

**LITURGIST-** Anyone who is interested in being a liturgist, please call or text Diana Grinavich at 570-954-4525 or email [dlg219@hotmail.com](mailto:dlg219@hotmail.com)

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## **RECIPE - Peanut Butter Cornflake Cookies**

(submitted by Ruthmary Newell in the Heavenly Delights COCU Cookbook)

### **Ingredients:**

4 cups crushed cornflakes  
1 (14oz.) can sweetened condensed milk  
8 ounces of peanut butter

### **Instructions:**

Mix all ingredients with a wooden spoon. Drop on a greased cookie sheet (about 1 1/2 teaspoons). Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

**FRIENDSHIP PADS** are in the pews. The primary reason is not to take attendance, but to afford visitors and others in the pew a connection with the people they are sitting with. It is also important for us to realize who has been away from church so that we can find out if there is some issue that is keeping them from sharing in worship. I would like for us as a congregation to reach out to people who are experiencing difficulties with prayer, a visit, a note. Friendship pads are also a way to keep in touch with visitors. I can't always meet new people at worship. Friendship Pads are about connecting each other with Jesus and changing lives. Each Monday, I read the names of our attendees and pray for those individuals. Our receptionist on Mondays, Kay Smith, writes a note of welcome to visitors who share their address. Please sign in each week so that we can stay connected with each other. –Pastor Jane

**EXERCISE CLASS-** So, how are your New Year's resolutions going? How many times did you say you should join a gym but don't really want to? Or you are too stiff and just want to start easy and have fun with a small, informal group? Come join us at Church Of Christ Uniting on Tuesdays at 2 pm. for 45 minutes of stretching, balance, and simple exercises. There is nothing on the floor, no jumping, and even some sitting on a chair, led by a professional who will help with issues. There is no fee, but donations are appreciated. Some pay \$2, some \$5, some nothing. If you have questions, feel free to call Phyllis at 570-690-1342.

**ALTAR FLOWERS-** If you would like to place flowers on the altar or on the side credence tables to remember or honor a loved one or special event, please contact Lois Giza at 570-287-0617 or at [sandlgiza@verizon.net](mailto:sandlgiza@verizon.net). You can check the floral calendar in the narthex for available dates and to sign up. The cost is \$30. You can send your payment to: COCU, 190 S. Sprague Avenue, Kingston PA 18704. Attn: Altar Guild. Thank you to everyone who provides our flower arrangements each week! Any flowers not taken home by the donors are given to our homebound, those in assisted living, or members who are in the hospital.

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY-** Do you like to knit, crochet, sew or not sew or quilt? Here is a ministry opportunity for you that will bring a smile and warmth to someone's heart. Prayer shawls, blankets, lap robes, pocket prayer shawls or even the cross in your pocket are made with love and prayer. These items have been made for centuries to symbolize an inclusive, unconditionally, loving God. Those who receive these gifts have been uplifted and prayed for by the maker. The gift then has one final blessing at worship before the recipient receives it. What are the gifts used for? Folks undergoing medical procedures, as a comfort after a loss or in times of stress, during bereavement; during an illness or recovery, or when someone just needs to know that they are wrapped in prayer. If this is a ministry you would like to get involved in, please let Pastor Jane know.

**EPILEPSY RESOURCE CENTER IN KINGSTON-** The Michael P. Loughlin Epilepsy Community and Resource Center opened in January at 845 Wyoming Ave. Rena Loughlin, wife of Michael and Mary Loughlin, mother of Michael are heading up the Resource Center. The center provides education and other resources for those living with epilepsy and their families. Phone number: 215-629-5003.

**ALZHEIMER SUPPORT GROUP-** Do you have a family member or friend who has Alzheimer's disease? Do you know someone who may be struggling because their loved one has Alzheimer's? There is a support group that meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at the Dallas Leggio's Restaurant. The meeting starts at 10 a.m. and is facilitated by Lois Reese who for years took care of her husband. Some people stay and have lunch but that is optional. –Donna Dickinson

**WE EXPRESS OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY** to the family of Kathy Morris, a former COCU member, who passed away on Wednesday, February 21, in Portland, Oregon. A memorial service is being planned in NEPA for June 15. Condolences may be sent to her daughter, Sarah, and her family at: Sarah Votrobeck, 10520 SE Market St. Portland, OR 97216. Contributions may be made in her memory to: Kenilworth Presbyterian Church, 4028 SE 34<sup>th</sup> Ave, Portland, OR 97202 or online: [kenilworthpc.com](http://kenilworthpc.com) at the bottom of the "About Us" page.



**STEPHEN MINISTRY CARDS** are in the pews. Please share them with a friend. COCU's Stephen Ministry program provides lay people one-to-one Christian care in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Stephen Ministry is confidential. The identity of those receiving care and everything they discuss with a trained Stephen Minister remains private. Could you benefit from this kind of one to one care? Do you know someone, perhaps a co-worker, relative, friend or neighbor who could benefit from this ministry? If so, please take the card and pass it to them. Questions, please contact Donna Dickinson at 570-814-6713 or Pastor Jane at 570-288-8434.

**THINKING OF YOU... THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH!**- The Parish Life Ministry Team is sending 25-30 "thinking of you" greeting cards each month to homebound, inactive and hospitalized COCU members. The cards are available in the Narthex before worship for everyone to sign. Please join us in this ministry each month in an effort to keep our COCU family close in our thoughts and prayers. If you would like to donate "blank or hello/thinking of you" cards to the team, please leave cards in the church office.



**THE EDUCATION TEAM** is starting a card writing ministry to our college students to give them a reminder of home and let them know that we're thinking about them and praying for them. In order for this to work, we need to know who our college students are! In the narthex are half sheets of paper to provide names, addresses, and a little bit about the students - like their year in college, what their major is, etc. Thank you for helping us make this project a success!

**CHURCH FRIENDS UNITING-** The Parish Life Ministry Team has an outreach program to identify church members who would benefit from a phone call or visit. Our hope is to maintain and strengthen the connection these members have to COCU. This effort would further support our monthly "thinking of you" card ministry. To learn more about this project, please contact any of the following members of the Parish Life Ministry Team: Phyllis Johnson (570-690-1342), or Judy Vanderburg (570-270-6647)



**THE CARING CONNECTION** is Ready to Serve You! If you need transportation to and from worship, doctors or shopping, wish a home visit, would like communion at your residence, could use a meal due to a family illness, please call the church office at 570-288-8434 (preferably before noon.) Give your name, the request and your contact number. Someone from The Caring Connection will be in touch.



**DEVOTIONAL LINE-** 570-288-2334. Don't forget to start or finish your day by listening to our church members and staff share their thoughts and prayers. Each volunteer records daily devotions for Sunday through Saturday for one week.

**IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE ARE ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL** Please call the Church Office at 570-288-8434. In an emergency, if you cannot reach Pastor Jane, please feel free to call her cell at 570-396-5883 or give a call to our Pastoral Care Visitor, Cheryl Fuller at 570-954-8877.



### MOTHER'S DAY FLOWER SALE

The Altar Guild is conducting a Mother's Day geranium sale. The flowers will be placed in the sanctuary for Mother's Day, Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup>. Please fill out the form below so that your loved ones will be honored and remembered. We are not doing windows. Cost of the flowers are \$5.00. After the service on the 12<sup>th</sup>, you may take your flowers to enjoy. As always, thank you for your support during the year. Please complete the form and return to the church by Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. You can place the form in the collection plate or send the form to Michelle Giza, 86 E. Vaughn Street, Kingston, PA 18704-4818 or Barbara Swanson, 215 Noxen Road, Harveys Lake, PA 18618. Thank you.

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#### Mother's Day Flowers Order Form

IN HONOR OF \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN BY \_\_\_\_\_

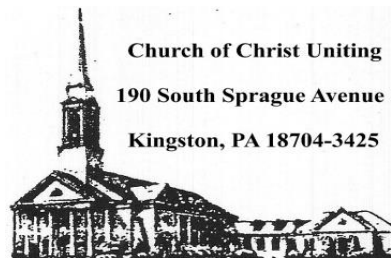
IN MEMORY OF \_\_\_\_\_



GIVEN BY \_\_\_\_\_

Number of flowers \_\_\_\_\_ Amount included \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHURCH OF CHRIST UNITING**  
Come share our Joy!  
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.  
Sunday School 10:15 a.m.  
Rev. Jane M. Pykus, Senior Pastor  
Dr. Cheryl A. Fuller, Pastoral Care



 COCU Online: [YouTube channel](#) - [webpage](#) - [Facebook page](#)   
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