

The BUZZ

Volume 30 Issue #5

MAY 2024



Lower Saucon United Church of Christ
Reverend Rebekah Thomas
1375 Third Avenue
Hellertown, PA 18055
610-838-8821

Sunday Worship 9:00 am
Sunday School 9:15 am

Lower Saucon UCC, a progressive congregation rich in history, exists to:

- Promote spiritual growth in all people of all ages
- Nurture a loving and caring Christian community
- Worship our Living God through faithful service

Lower Saucon UCC: a place to believe, belong and worship together.

2024 CONSISTORY

Cheryl Christman	Kirk Gorkos (Treas.)
Kate Griffiths	Judy Koch
Tim Mattes	Tom Sofka (VP)
Lindsey Sanders (Sec.)	Tina Seifert
	Paul Wilhelm (Pres.)

Church Office Hours
Church Office
Fellowship Hall/Kitchen

Tuesday-Thursday 9 am to 12 noon
(610) 838-8821
(610) 838-2659

Website
Church Email
Pastor's Email
Online Giving
Visit us on Facebook
Email for BUZZ Articles

www.lowersauconucc.org
churchoffice@lowersauconucc.org
pastorbecky1121@gmail.com
lowersauconucc.org/donate/
[facebook.com Lower Saucon UCC](https://facebook.com/LowerSauconUCC)
info@lowersauconucc.org

Lay Leader Schedule Ushers/Greeters

Usher of the Month Scripture Reader

TBA Children's Sermon

May	5	Carlene Barrell	Cheryl Christman	Lindsey Sanders	Nancy Gorkos
May	12	Tina Seifert	Diana Severn	Diana Severn	Diana Severn
May	19	Betty Byerley	Kris Breidenbach	Paul Wilhelm	Pastor Becky
May	26	JoAnn Sofka	Tom Sofka	Betty Byerley	Josh Sanders

FROM PASTOR BECKY ...

We are in the middle of those rainy Spring months where the grass seems to be growing faster than anyone can really keep up with and allergies are out of control. If I'm going to be honest, I have to admit that lately I find myself longing for a pause. I've been craving time to just sit and breathe. It is still almost two months away. Yet, I'm looking forward to my summer vacation with eager anticipation. I can't wait to just put everything aside for a few days, and relax. It feels like all of us are going almost non-stop, barely taking the time to breathe when we finish one thing before starting the next. Rarely, do we actually take the time to pause.

But, pausing is what we need to do to feed our spirits. Because it is in that pause that we are most likely to notice God's movement. It is in that pause when we are able to actually see the blessings that God has given us. It is in that pause that we are able to truly see the gifts that come from the people that God has put in our lives. Soon we will all be busy with summer vacations. I encourage you, as you are planning, to set aside time just to breathe. Allow yourselves time to just sit with God

In light and love,
Pastor Becky



The Big Takeaway by Matt Laney

The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" – John 1:29 (NRSV)

One great misinterpretation of the Bible is that God saves individuals apart from one another. In fact, nearly every word about sin and salvation in the Bible is collective, communal, sometimes even global.

In the passage above, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Note that "sin" is singular, as is "the world." There is one malaise which afflicts the entire world.

What is that singular affliction? By my lights, it is the false idea that I am not only separate from others, I am the center of the world which means salvation is all about me. Ironically, nothing unites humanity like this common delusion or our shared need of grace.

Grace arrives as a lamb, Mary's humble little lamb. John does not say the lamb will take sin away in the future. Ego-centrism is removed the moment we look away from ourselves and to the Lamb. That is not only the good news; it is world saving news.

Jesus, take "me" away until we are all one.

Prayer

Our Father, Our Mother, Our Creator, thank you for being our salvation.





Consistory Corner

LSUCC CONSISTORY MINUTES

(Pending Approval)

April 10, 2024

In attendance: Tina Seifert, Lindsey Sanders, Pastor Becky Thomas, Cheryl Christman, Kirk Gorkos, Paul Wilhelm, Tim Mattes, Judy Koch, Kate Griffiths, and Tom Sofka.

Meeting called to order by Paul. Lindsey led devotions on Grace. Pastor Becky led us in prayer.

Secretary's report was presented as prepared by Lindsey Sanders:

- Tom made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Tim seconded. All voted to accept.

Treasurer's report was presented by Kirk:

- Today Kirk presented a Profit and Loss statement for Q1 2024. Tina made a motion to accept. Cheryl seconded. All voted to accept.

Pastor's Report:

3/11/2024 – 4/7/2024

Period	Hours	PCE	Notes on Activities
3/11-3/17	25	6	Consistory; Funeral; Midweek Lent
3/18-3/24	21	2	
3/25-3/31	24	3	Holy Week
4/1-4/7	20	3	
Total	90	13	

Notes:

- Conference Meeting 6/7-6/9 (Alan will be preaching); registration ends 5/6
- Vacation scheduled 6/24-6/30

President's Communication:

- Nothing new to report.

Committee reports:

- Property –
 - Mowed the lawn for the first time on Thursday
 - Waxed the floors, including the Sanctuary
 - Alternating cleaning crews is working out well
- Service –
 - Easter candy profited over \$4000
 - Yard sale June 1st – collecting items the week before; there will be spaces available if congregants wish to set up their own tables in the parking lot.
- Christian Ed –
 - Game day and pickleball on Saturday 4/13
 - Escape Room – April 21

- VBS – June 17-20 (SCUBA theme)
- Sunday school – Last day June 2; Rally Day September 8

- Worship –
 - Digital hymnal paperwork is complete, we are just waiting to send the check
 - Should have it in hand within a week of sending the check

Concerns from the Past:

- Tim will bring a security camera to the May meeting so we can look at it and decide whether we should install them around the church.
- May 4th at 10am Consistory will be meeting to go through the Consistory handbook.

Concerns for the Future:

- Mothers' Day brunch after church on 5/12 provided by the Gorkos family.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8th at 6:30. Meeting was adjourned, and all joined in the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey

Consistory meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings are open to every member of our congregation. For comments, concerns or further details, please see any member of Consistory.

stewardship report

March Income

\$6,760.00 Current Expenses

337.00 Benevolences

487.00 Facilities Use

445.00 Memorials

1229.00 Fundraising

\$9,258.00 Total



Our church family wants to share in your joys and sorrows. Hospitals and care facilities do not notify churches or share information, so please contact the church office with information about family members who are hospitalized, in care, or in need of prayer for any reason. We'd also like to share your joys so be sure to let us know those as well.



* H O M E *

FUND

Contributions to our "Helping Our Members Emergency" fund are coming in. You can give to this fund anytime simply by writing "HOME" on your church envelope. The amount you give will be credited to your church offering statement. Lower Saucon will also add to the HOME fund by giving 10% of all fundraising profits.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- May 2 Edward Gross
Carol Reichard
- May 6 Steve Donchez
- May 7 Faye Johnson
Lindsey Sanders
- May 10 Diana Severn
- May 12 Deanna Spengler
- May 14 Douglas Laubach
Zachary Lysek
Ivy Mattes
- May 23 Kelsey Lysek
- May 25 Elaine Kantor
- May 29 Karyl Treese



MAY ANNIVERSARYS

- May 7 Wilbur & Marge Johnson
Ralph & Mercyna Yoder
- May 15 Randy & Mary Koder
- May 26 Silas & Debbie Rodenbach



If you, or your family members, were omitted from the celebration lists please accept our apologies and contact the church office to see that the information is updated.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Attention Graduates

If someone in your family is graduating please email the information about their degree and future plans along with a photo to the church so we can celebrate your accomplishments in our June issue of the Buzz.

ADULT FORUM

Our Adult Forum will continue meeting after worship in the Gardner Room. We are having a discussion based upon the book "Making Sense of the Cross" by David J. Lose. If you are interested in joining, contact Andrea Keller (afkeller07@gmail.com).



Mark your calendar and plan to help out as we invite our community to join us for Scuba VBS, June 17-20. Let Nancy Gorkos know if you would like to help in any way.

Family Game Event

May 11, 2-5 PM



All are welcome to join us as we enjoy the pleasure of friendly, family competition playing games together. Bring your favorite game along or learn a new one. It's all part of the fun. We

have added Pickle Ball to our game options.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE NEWS

YARD SALE

LSUCC will participate in the community yard sale 8am-2pm, Saturday, June 1. We will be having refreshments available. Start collecting items to donate that will be sold with proceeds going to the church. Items can be dropped off at the church Tuesday, May 28 from 9 am to noon, Wednesday, May 29 from 5 pm to 7pm, and Thursday, May 30 from 9 am to noon. We will offer rental space **OUTSIDE only** Round Tables for \$10 - advance registration is required. **No** indoor space is available for rent. Please contact Kate Griffiths or Cheryl Christman if you have any questions or would be willing to help in any capacity.



SHOO-FLY PIES

Shoo-fly pies will be baked on May 18. The price is \$10.00 and pies can be picked up from 10am – Noon. Pies should be pre-ordered on the sign-up sheet posted in the side hall or Fellowship Hall or you can call Gerrie (610-838-9350) or the church office by May 15.



Gift Basket Bingo



May 5 2 – 4:15 pm

\$10 will get you one double bingo card for 20 games of bingo. Children accompanied by a paying adult, \$5.00.

Extra cards are \$.50. Light refreshments served at intermission are included in admission.

Hope to see you there!

Anyone willing to donate a basket, please see Cheryl Christman.

ALLIANCE STAMP MINISTRY

Please continue to be on the lookout for the envelopes you receive with stamps. Just trim your used envelope postage so there is 1/3 inch of paper surrounding the stamp, and then drop them in one of the collection containers located in the Narthex or Fellowship Hall. If you want to know more about this ministry visit:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj0Gl1S3j6Ec>

Grocery Gift Cards

Sign up for June Gift Cards by May 19 with delivery scheduled for Sunday, June 2. The Church earns 5% of the amount we sell. If there are any questions please see



or call Gerrie Koch. You can sign up for cards in the side hall, Fellowship Hall or by phoning Gerrie or the church office.



EVANGELISM & MISSION NEWS

Fellowship Hour

- May 5: No Fellowship Hour
- May 12: Gorkos - Mothers' Day Brunch
- Jun 2:
- July 7

Thank you to the Severn Family for sponsoring Fellowship Hour in April. We will not have fellowship hour on May 5 but **EVERYONE** is invited to help us celebrate the female care givers in our lives on May 12, with a brunch sponsored by the Gorkos Family. You can sign up to sponsor a Sunday Fellowship Hour on the side hall bulletin board. Contact Barbara Gross or Kate Griffiths if you have questions.

JOYFUL NOISE

Make a

Our JOYFUL NOISE campaign raised \$29.00 in March for Heifer International. In May, the money collected will support Phoebe Ministries.



This club meets at Elaine Kantor's home, usually monthly. They will be reading, *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. For date and time information please see Martha Sterling or Elaine Kantor.

Phoebe Partnership

Thank you to everyone who donates or helps make items. Phoebe staff and residents appreciate our efforts. Donations of large print puzzle, word-search and fill-in books, adult coloring books, small boxes of crayons or colored pencils are always welcomed by the residents.



Look for a collection basket in the Narthex. If you'd like to do some simple sewing to help create prayer items or if you knit, crochet or have extra yarn—any colors, prayer blankets size 3' x 3', are being made for our ministry at Phoebe Richland. **Yarn and/or blankets can be dropped off at church or someone can pick them up.** Questions? Call or text Cheryl at 610-657-1787

ON HOLY GROUND

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **Through your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.** As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Our congregation will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024.

OUR QUILTERS

Our Quilters meet each Tuesday from 9 AM to 3 PM. New members are always welcome. No experience necessary, just a willingness to learn. This week they will be pinning in the quilt that will be raffled in December. A picture will be included in the June Buzz. Tickets are attached at the end of this Buzz. They are available in larger quantities by contacting Elaine Kantor or the Church office.

COMMUNITY FOOD BANKS

Please continue to support both of our area Food Banks. Monetary donations can be made through your church offering or directly to: New Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church, ATTN: Food Bank, 3233 Apples Church Road, Bethlehem, PA 18015, or the Emergency Food Bank at Word of Life, ATTN: Food Bank, 3221 Bingen Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18015.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS



May 1, 7:00PM

DAILY DEVOTIONS

The new "These Days" & "Upper Room" are in. If you want one dropped off to you, call or email the church. If you are more techno-savvy and would like a free Stillspeaking daily devotional message delivered to your email inbox visit <http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/>



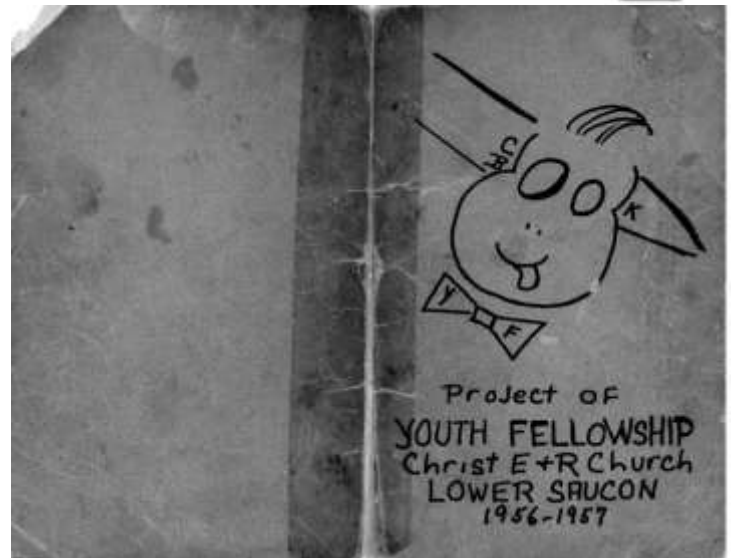
VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

to serve as greeters.

If you would be willing to take a turn greeting folks at the door on Sunday morning please let Diana Severn know. We always welcome others as acolytes, lay readers and children's sermon leaders as well.



Did you know ?



The Youth Fellowship of our congregation published a collection of recipes in 1957. Kate Griffiths found a copy of it among her sister Sandy's effects and shared it with us. We have been able to identify most of the recipe contributors. If you'd like to see it or think you can help identify the few names that remain a mystery, take a look at the photocopy that will be in the Narthex for the next few weeks. Among the recipes there are also a few photos. See if you know who these "young" folk are.



Remember to wear **RED** on
Pentecost Sunday

We invite you to wear red to worship on Pentecost Sunday to help remind us of the fire of the Spirit.





JOINT YOUTH MINISTRY

A meeting of a joint group of youth in 7th to 12th grade will be held monthly at First UCC. For further details contact Pastor Becky.

SPIRITED AWAY BOOK CLUB



Come escape with us as we explore books that will nourish your Spirit! We will meet in-person at LSUCC on the last Thursday of the month 7pm. Join us for one book or all the books!

May 30: *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them* by John Ortberg

LOWER SAUCON CHURCH CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

Although this cemetery is now an independent non-profit, it was once owned by our congregation. Many of the ancestors of our congregation are buried there, perhaps some of yours. The Board would like to remind you that grave sites are still available at reasonable rates. For more information check the posting on our bulletin board or for assistance please contact Kathy J Kline at 610-419-0264 or Justina McCardle at 610-838-6784.



GENOROSITY TEAM--FRIENDS OF THE CONFERENCE

Jesus Prayed "...that they all may be one." John 17:21



Pentecost Sunday reminds us that all Christians are called to be ministers of the "Good News" like the disciples were, and to remember the unity God

wants us to achieve for God's purpose. Your individual gift to Penn Northeast Conference can be offered in addition to your church's communal gift to OCWM. If you decide to and are able to provide an individual gift to PNEC, as a Friend of the Conference, you will receive a written receipt for your gift of \$25 or more, and a thank you gift for a gift of \$50 or more. Your donations can be sent to: Penn Northeast Conference, 431 Delaware Avenue, Palmerton, PA. 18071. Please include your name, address and email.

**Letter from Our Conference Minister Dated
April 18, 2024**

“Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the soul – and sings the tune without words – and never stops at all” Emily Dickinson

Dear Friends,

I have spent this week in a variety of meetings – maybe that’s not really new, but this week the meetings have been different...

I started the week with the Authorization Working Group, which is a regular monthly meeting, but this week we welcomed two new Members in Discernment. The Mental Health Team met to work on a training day in October. The Executive Committee of the Conference Board began to strategically plan for our summer meeting and our Board Retreat with new and continuing Board members. Today, I am spending the day meeting with professionals at the Phoebe Institute on Aging focused on Compassion.

Amid these conversations, the Conference Ministers met with our Consultant about Keystone. Keystone Working Group meets tomorrow and again a full day of exploration and direction-setting. Saturday will find me at the Penn West Conference All Association meeting talking about Keystone and our directions. As a celebration on Sunday, I will serve as the liturgist at my home church and then celebrate the Ordination of Sharon Frye at Salem Weatherly.

So, what has your week been like? Where are you finding energy? What is making you feel empowered to do the work you need to do? What is sapping your energy or confidence?

I live as a person of hope. I heard someone say that hope shouldn’t be a verb, but a noun. Hope is. Hope nurtures. Hope endures. And hope wanes when we are tired or worn or burdened. So, amid the meetings I attended this week, I found a moment to walk outside and listen to the birds sing. I found a moment to play tug of war with Tuki, my dog. I found a moment to sit quietly in prayer and meditation. And these things renewed my energy and my spirit.

How do you renew your energy, your spirit, and your hope? Take a moment right now while you read this

letter, put your feet on the floor, take a deep breath and move into a place of rest, renewal, hope and joy. May you find peace in your everyday life – even with the preponderance of meetings and commitments and issues to address. Be filled with **hope**.

Blessings, Bonnie

Search-A-Word Puzzle

Based on Romans 8:14-17 (NRSV)

S L A V E R Y O U T N I O J
P F Q U R E C E I V E V D D
V A D E L H G G D N Y A C N
R C G S V E L Y I O E U K E
E T O U E I O O S P G H O R
C N G F R R R P N H R U W D
E O N F Y S I S S Q C I M L
I I I E W R F P R B T T K I
V T R R I N I A X N S A H H
E P A T D M E C E I F L T C
D O E B I F D S R A C L I F
T D B H B V S H L M R R W Q
W A U H U A C L R R S U Y Y
C R E H T A F Y H I K C A B

Romans 8:14-17

For **all** who are **led** by the **Spirit** of God are children of **God**. For you did not **receive** a spirit of **slavery** to **fall back** into **fear**, but you have **received** a spirit of **adoption**. **When** we **cry**, “**Abba! Father!**” it is that **very** Spirit **bearing witness with** our spirit that we are **children** of God, and if children, then **heirs**, heirs of God and **joint** heirs with **Christ**—if, in **fact**, we **suffer** with **him** so that we may also be **glorified** with him.

A special thank you to Betty Byerley & Tony Neuroth for acting as proof readers.
PLEASE SUBMIT ANY INFORMATION FOR THE BUZZ BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH TO
info@lowersauconucc.org
I WILL REPLY TO IT SO YOU KNOW I RECEIVED IT.



COME JOIN THE FUN

June 17-June 20

6 - 8:30 PM

AT LOWER Saucon UCC

1375 Third Ave Hellertown PA
610-838-8821

New Friends – Amazing activities - Wild games – Lip smacking snacks - Incredible music

Questions, phone Nancy Gorkos at 610-838-1067. To register return this completed form to the church office.

Child's Name: _____

Age: _____ DOB ____/____/____ School Grade Completed: _____

Name of Parents(s): _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Caregiver's Cell Phone _____

Email Address: _____

Church Home: _____

Allergies or other medical conditions: _____

I ___ give permission ___ do not give permission for use of any photograph or video/audio recording in which my child/ward appears for promotional purposes.

In case of an emergency when parents cannot be reached, please contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to child: _____

OUR CALENDAR PAGE

Please see

<https://lowersauconucc.org/our-calendar/>

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Worship at 9:00 am
Sunday School at 9:30 am

\$1 each or \$5 for 6

- 1st Prize Hand Quilted Queen
Size Dresden Plate Quilt
- 2nd Prize Hand Crochet Afghan
- 3rd Prize \$100 Giant Gift Card
- 4th Prize \$50 Copperhead Grille
Gift Card
- 5th Prize \$50 Lowes Gift Card
- 6th Prize \$50 Barnes & Noble
Gift Card
- 7th Prize \$40 Hellertown Diner
Gift Certificate
- 8th Prize \$25 CVS Gift Card
- 9th Prize Embroidered Wall Hanging
- 10th Prize Bath Products Gift Basket
- 11th Prize Ronco Ready Grill
- 12th Prize Charcuterie Board
- 13th Prize Hand Knit Hat & Mittens

Drawing: December 8, 2024

Sept 21 Shoofly Pie
TBA Chicken Pot Pie
View our website for future
fundraisers and church events.

Thank You! Good Luck!

Lower Saucon UCC
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Quilt Raffle Drawing
December 8, 2024

Name _____

Phone _____

Seller _____

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Quilt Raffle Drawing
December 8, 2024

Name _____

Phone _____

Seller _____





The Holy Ground Where God Appears

Rev. Traci D. Blackmon, Associate General Minister, United Church of Christ

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3:5

Scripture names many places as holy. Yet my heart resonates most with Moses' encounter with the burning bush in Exodus. God appears in the flames of a burning bush that is not consumed. Yet what matters most to me in this text is not where or to whom God appears, but why God appears.

God appears in response to the cries of God's people who are being treated unjustly. God appears because of the people's cries, and wherever God appears is holy ground.

I often have the privilege of standing on holy ground as I travel the breadth of our beloved Church. These are places where God shows up through the work of God's people to treat other's needs as holy.

Plymouth UCC in Des Moines is holy ground, a church that removed the

stairs to the pulpit and replaced them with circular ramps, honoring a God who still speaks through preachers and laity who do not stand.

Plymouth Congregational in Kansas is holy ground, a church where one of our unhoused siblings welcomed me to "their church" after worship, before heading back outside by choice with his bags and dog. This reminds us that those unhoused should still have a home with us.

Saint John's UCC in St. Louis is holy ground, a church that partners with the community to feed and clothe those in need of help, and whose members take communion to their surrounding neighbors as an extension of Christ's table of grace.

Trinity UCC in Chicago is holy ground, partnering with the food security network to import organic fruit and vegetables in a neighborhood robbed of access to healthy food options.

Wherever you are this morning, take the time to see how God is moving through the work and witness of those who gather and know that you are, we all are, on holy ground.

The Strengthen the Church Offering reflects the commitment of all settings of the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations as we work to become a multi-cultural/multi-racial, accessible to all Christian movement.

