



SPRUCE RUN *Fellowship*

SPRUCE RUN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ZION CHURCH

Summer 2023 Vol. 68, No.2

From the Pastor's Pen



Summer

The seven weeks of Easter have passed, the sun and pollen are both out in full force, school has ended for some kids and will be done very soon for others. We'll be moving to 9:00 am worship services starting in June. We're headed into summer!

This summer we'll be taking the church outside with events like PubLICK Theology, Carriage House Learning, and two Joint Outdoor Worship Services. We'll also be taking time to study particular faith documents, namely the Wisdom Books of Hebrew Scripture and an early church catechism called The Didache.

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A Message from the Council President

I hope you have noticed the new bulletin boards that are up in the office hallway and the lounge. These are as a result of the Faithful Journey team's efforts to engage the congregation in our learning activities from our training. The overall premise of the Faithful Journey program is to focus on new practices on "Where have you seen God at work recently?"

This program is composed of a group of several churches in the New Jersey synod with an emphasis on learning what God is up to in today's world. Churches have changed over the last fifty years with attendance and belief dropping off significantly. To sow seeds throughout the church we need to focus on new practices, especially on listening and experimenting.

A few months ago, Laura Mortensen led us through a one-on-one discussion with other members of the congregation during worship. We were asked to learn more about each other and to really listen to the responses. And the new bulletin boards are providing us with opportunities to learn more about one another - our thoughts, accomplishments, milestones. The new question for Views from the Pews is "What is our greatest strength as a church?" We want to be a little more thought provoking this time and hope to identify some topics that can lead to new experiments for Spruce Run.

Overall we need to foster more involvement from the entire congregation on our journey. The team members will make it a priority to share more of our learnings. We encourage everyone to: Ask questions, Suggest experiments, Test ideas, and LISTEN to one another. Feel free to chat with any member of the team to ask about their experience or to offer suggestions. The team members are: Pastor Chris, Sonia Cordova, George Creasy, Mary Gaydick, Janet Ledoux, Laura Mortensen and Karen Smith.

News from Our Committees & Interest Groups

Tuesday Quilters

The Tuesday Quilters now have six members. We are working on Lutheran World Relief Quilts and gathering patterns and new ideas for our next craft show. If you have any ideas we would love to hear them! Either see me in church, call me (Rose-Marie, 908-735-444), or better yet, come see us on a Tuesday morning from 9-12. You may even want to join us! We would love to have someone join us that enjoys ironing!

North Hunterdon Food Pantry

The Food Pantry has been very busy the last couple of months. We successfully provided 35 families with everything needed for a complete Easter dinner, including a ham donated by ShopRite in Clinton in addition to receiving their monthly requested groceries. All children, received a small bag with a chocolate Easter bunny along with additional goodies. They also received an additional dozen of eggs along with a kit to enable the children to dye their own eggs.

As things are getting back to normal, our government visits have begun to ensure that we are satisfying all our requirements. Norwescap has a new Senior Director who paid the pantry a visit. She was very satisfied with our management of the food pantry. We had the opportunity to ask her some questions and she took some of our suggestions back with her. The Senior Director scheduled a SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) specialist to visit the pantry during the May distribution. SNAP is a federal program that provides monthly funds for people to buy the food they need to thrive. Eight of our clients were signed up to the SNAP program to receive benefits. She will also attend the June distribution for follow-up as well as interview potential recipients. If you know of anyone who would be eligible for the SNAP program, have them come to the pantry for the June distribution on June 8 from 9-11 am. They can learn about the program and complete an application.

We also had a visit on distribution day from the State of New Jersey Department of Agriculture. The gentlemen was very pleased with the appearance, the required documentation and records

that the pantry had on file. The last visitors we had was the Administrative Assistant and the Food Sourcing Network Manager from Norwescap. Because we communicate with Norwescap every month, it was a pleasure to be able to talk to them directly about suggestions we had for food selections and any questions we had. Again, we got compliments and a good review about the work we are doing.

The Boy Scouts did it again, they organized a food drive and delivered over 2500 pounds of food to the pantry. The pantry volunteers and student volunteers, checked expiration dates and shelved the donations.

The pantry could not run without the dependable volunteers.

Thank you,
Gail, Karen, Janet and Sue

Family Promise

We just completed our first summer hosting obligation. Thanks to donations from twelve Spruce Run Lutheran Church members, three St. John Neumann's church members, a \$250 Thrivent grant, and \$250 worth of grocery cards from St. John's Social committee, we collected enough to support the families in Family Promise for

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Council Meeting Highlights

January 10, 2023

- December 2022 expenses were higher due to winter heating fuel bills & payment of bills related to carriage house repairs.
- Dividends from the Knispel Fund will be sold annually, and proceeds directed to operating.
- Christmas Eve attendance was down approximately 40 attendees from 2022. Attendance was impacted by a spike in COVID cases within the congregation & an extended power outage in some areas.
- There will be a Potluck Luncheon immediately following the annual meeting on January 22, 2023.
- There will be a Soup & Bread Supper, Wednesday, February 23 before the Ash Wednesday worship service.
- Lower Valley Presbyterian church in Califon will be contacted to see if additional volunteers are needed for their day of service, January 16, 2023.

February 14, 2023

- The "Wisdom Project" will be starting July 2023.
- NJ SYNOD district meeting is March 5 @ St. John's Church in Summit, NJ.
- The annual NJ SYNOD assembly is May 13, 2023, at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. Two council members can attend.
- Pastor will be on vacation April 10-16, 2023. Worship leader to be confirmed.
- Multiple exterior lights have been repaired.
- SRLC is participating in online sessions provided by the NJ SYNOD on "Money Management." Participation allows SRLC to be eligible for a grant to initiate a new ministry.
- Leasing of unused space is still being evaluated.
- The financial audit is very close to being completed for years through 2021. Calendar year 2022 still to be scheduled.
- SRLC membership rolls need to be updated.
- St Luke's, Dunellen, NJ will have a sale February 18, 2023.

March 14, 2023

- A violin & cello student concert was held at SRLC. 11 families were in attendance.
- Pastor met with the Chaplain of Centenary University. An open line of communication will be kept with the campus student members of the "Future Social Workers Association".
- Pastor will be on vacation April 10-16, 2023. Pastor Karol VanWolfen (St Luke's, Washington) will cover. Worship lead for April 16 TBD.
- The raised planting beds at SRLC will be prepared for the 2023 growing season.
- Final work on the carriage shed will be completed within the next few weeks.
- The Food Panty will be scheduling an open house.
- An Easter egg hunt will be prepared for the Sunday School students on Easter Sunday, after worship.
- We are working with other local churches to organize Vacation Bible School.
- A campaign is being organized to identify a chair for the Stewardship Committee.

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April 19, 2023

- Easter week attendance was good. Online attendance nearly equaled in-person attendance on Easter Sunday.
- SRLC completed the SYNOD/ EMU 6-week program on money. A similar, shortened program will be developed to present to the congregation.
- SRLC is facing significant scheduling challenges for confirmation classes. Options are being reviewed. Resolution to be determined.
- Pastor Chris will be leading worship at St James Church in Phillipsburg on May 7, 2023 (First Communion) while Pastor Schantzenbach will lead worship at SRLC.
- A Thank you goes out to Gene Armbricht, Sara Armbricht, Matt Gaydick, Paul Henriksen & Erik Henriksen for preparing & serving breakfast following the Easter sunrise service.
- One of the three ceiling fans in the sanctuary has been replaced. The other two are targeted for replacement in the near future.
- The Eagle Scout project to repair & update the carriage house has been completed.

- Back gutters & leaf piles have been cleared.
- The Yard Sale targeted for May 6 has been postponed.
- Building security is being reviewed.
- Leasing of space freed by the preschool is still being reviewed.

- Solar panels on the roof of the church buildings are being considered.
- SRLC, with earmarked donations from our members, will be a Silver Sponsor of the Lebanon Township Fireman's Festival – July 20-23, 2023.

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CONGREGATION COUNCIL		COMMITTEE CHAIRS & LIAISON	
President:	Janet Ledoux	Fellowship & Outreach	
Vice President:	Erik Henriksen	Danielle Beyers & Gail Vajda	
Secretary:	Sonia Cordova	Youth	
Treasurer:	George Creasy	Laura Mortensen	
Financial Secretary:	Paul Henriksen	Building Discernment	
	Rosemarie (Posie) Adickes	Erik Henriksen	
	Gene Armbricht	Holistic Stewardship	
	Danielle Beyers	Rosemarie Adickes	
	Brad Cox	Worship and Music	
	Richard Glahn	Matt Gaydick & Judi Mansilla	
	Judi Mansilla	Altar Guild	
	Laura Mortensen	Judi Mansilla	
	Sue O'Brien	North Hunterdon Food Pantry	
	Gail Vajda	Gail Vajda	
SUNDAY SCHOOL		Tuesday Quilters	
Superintendent		Rose-Marie Green	
Laura Mortensen		Family Promise	
Seventh Grade (Confirmation I)		Wendy DiNapoli	
George Creasy & Rob Ossi		FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER	
Eighth Grade (Confirmation II)		Jane Creasy & Karen Smith	
Pastor Chris Halverson		WEBSITE	
STAFF		Mark Creasy & Karen Smith	
Pastor:	Chris Halverson		
Music Director:	Candice Peare		
Handbell Director:	Qingyang (Kelly) Ye		
Secretary:	Karen Smith		
Sextons:	Rosemarie Adickes		
	Sara Armbricht		

Worship:

For the summer, we'll move worship from 10 am to 9 am. Additionally, we'll be joining up with Bethlehem Presbyterian to worship together again. We'll worship at Finn Road Park in Pittstown on July 30th and August 20th. Both services will be at 9:30 am.

PubLICK Theology:

In the colder months, we meet at the Inn at Glen Gardner to talk faith and have a time of food and fellowship together—We call this PUBlic Theology. During the summer months, we switch things up a bit and go to Gronsky's Milk House (125 West Main Street in High Bridge, we meet on the benches by the river) and we call it PubLICK Theology. So, join us for the first Wednesday of the month in June, July, and August at 7 pm for some ice cream, fellowship, and theological conversation. Upcoming topics include Wisdom, Creation, and the book of Romans!

Carriage House Learning:

Starting on June 8th, we will be gathering at 7 pm in our freshly repainted Carriage House (located next to our lower parking lot) to read and discuss the Didache. The Didache is a catechism likely written by the

same community who wrote the Gospel of Matthew; this document was lost for centuries and rediscovered in the 1870s. It gives us a look into the life and practices of the earliest church. Bring your own lawn chair, and some snacks if you'd like to share 'em!

Wisdom from Spruce Run:

Please check out the entire article devoted to this program found later in the newsletter to get the full scope of what we'll be doing. We'll be meeting downstairs to learn about Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes on July 12th, 19th, and 26th at 7 pm. We'll be seeing how these books of wisdom echo our own life experiences.

Three Weeks on Money:

Several members of Spruce Run went through a program endorsed by the national church, called "Six Weeks on Money." It is a values-based finance course that not only offers skills for managing finances, but also helps participants grow a healthier relationship with money. In August, we hope to reproduce a version of this course for congregants and neighbors who would like to learn a few "money moves" and set some goals for themselves.

Wisdom from Spruce Run

This summer Spruce Run is going to do something fairly ambitious, write a book together!

We'll use studying the wisdom books of the Bible (Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes) as a springboard for thinking in wise ways, and recognizing the insights we've accumulated over our lifetimes. Then we'll gather these aphorisms together and create a booklet of congregational wisdom that we can share!

This process of mining wisdom will: honor the wisdom of the aged, offer young people our collective wisdom, and help everyone who participates in the program more deeply understand three books of the bible.

Pastor will be introducing the program: Wisdom from Spruce Run at the next Pub Theology, on June 7th. Then we will move to the church basement and hold a session on Proverbs on July 12th, Job on July 19th, and Ecclesiastes on July 26th. In August, we'll hold a few catch-up sessions for

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anyone who missed the first round but would like to participate, while also collecting folk's nuggets of wisdom. Then everyone's ideas and aphorisms will be collected and edited in time for the book to come out in November!

A Gut Check on Church Finances

It's rarely fun to talk about money, but not talking about it can be even more unpleasant. At the last council meeting we agreed to lend ourselves an additional \$20,000 from the CMA fund.

Now, when I have talked about our deficit spending in the past, I've done so with one eye on national trends, especially regarding COVID's effect on church participation, financial and otherwise. You might remember I pointed out that our income was off about 30%, which fit within the 20-40% range that churches all over the country were seeing. I initially thought what I was seeing in our budget was disruption from COVID and the shut downs.

Looking more closely and with hindsight, that's only half the story. There is also the very particular history of how we've

been spending money here at Spruce Run. Back in 2014 we'd spent most of our reserves to keep the lights on; we bounced back for a year or two, but then with the exception of 2020, we've been running a deficit since 2016.

While the weirdness of the last few years has damaged us financially, as it did most congregations, there is more going on. On average, for the last eight years, we've spent nearly \$25,000 more a year than we've taken in. Essentially, we depleted all our "rainy day" emergency funds before COVID hit. So, in our budget, when you see money in various funds, that is indicating what we've taken out of that fund, not what remains.

Obviously, we can't fix a nearly decades long problem overnight, but we do need to start thinking about money coming in and money going out.

You might remember my first year with you I procured a small grant from the Synod for \$1,280, and we used that money for some particular things that reintroduced the congregation to the community after COVID. For this year, we're going after some bigger grants. We're looking at a \$12,000 matching grant from the Lilly foundation

and a larger grant from the Synod. These grants should help us make it through the year.

Going forward we will need to figure out how to regularly fill a yearly \$30,000 gap. Here are a couple things to consider:

- I would ask you to take some time to pray about the congregation's finances, and for discernment and wisdom for everyone making decisions about our future.
- If all 120 people who have attended Spruce Run at least once in the last year gave an extra \$250, we would no longer have a deficit.
- We need to plan creatively and faithfully about next year's budget and how to do ministry going forward.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Chris



ShopRite gift cards are available.

Please reach out to Sara or Denise if you would like to purchase some.

Remember this is a very easy way to financially support our church.

not just one, not two, but THREE weeks! There were just two families in the program, so we could spread our donations out further. Family Promise continues to have gaps in sponsorship, so they were thrilled we were able to fill in some of those gap weeks. On May 21, Wendy dropped off ShopRite gift cards to each family to serve for a two week stretch and will drop off more on June 11th for that week. Each family received \$250 per week to purchase their groceries. Wendy met both families and they were very gracious and thankful for the help. One woman had just broken her foot, so was dealt yet another set back. The other family said they just had word there was an apartment opening up in Flemington where they could move to, so good news for them! A new family of five is moving in shortly, so we will help them as well for the week of June 11.

Our next hosting covers the week of August 13. There are no new updates about when the new Promise Center will open as a permanent transitional housing facility. Keep Family Promise in your prayers that their renovations go smoothly and quickly so they can move

forward. We are planning to donate whatever bedding items or toys that we no longer need to the new Center as they make requests for their needs. Some other ways you can support Family Promise:

1. SparkGood at WalMart- go to <https://www.walmart.com/registry/registryfor good> and choose Family Promise of Hunterdon County. Round up your purchases made online or in the app.

2. The first Family Promise Golf Classic is June 5th at Heron Glen Golf Course. Join in or volunteer!

3. Make a donation any time. Current needs are Wal-Mart and gas gift cards, baby wipes, cleaning products, paper towels, toilet paper. Call the office to schedule a drop off. (908) 782-2490

Thank you all for your continued support!
Blessings,
Wendy

WELCA

In May, we took our mystery trip to see "Million Dollar Quartet" at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse. All women are invited on the third Wednesday of each month for lunch, fellowship, and Bible study beginning at noon.

Recipes from the Congregation

Carmelized Onion Tarts

2 T olive oil
2 medium onions, sliced
2 red apples(Braeburn/Gala),
cut into small pieces
2 t brown sugar
1/2 t Kosher salt
1/4 t black pepper
2 sheets frozen puff pastry
(17.3 ounce package), thawed
1/2 c crème fraiche/sour cream

Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and golden brown, 12-15 minutes.

Stir in the apples, salt, and pepper and cook until just tender, 2 minutes.

Place each sheet of pastry on a parchment-lined baking sheet and prick all over with a fork. Spread with the crème fraiche, leaving a 1/2 inch border. Top with the onion mixture and bake until the pastry is crisp and browned, 30 to 35 minutes.

Cut into pieces before serving.

Submitted by: Candy Peare

- SRLC will participate again in Lebanon Township Community Day on September 23, 2023. Options are being considered for what SRLC can do to enhance our presence and heighten awareness of the church.
- Summer worship schedule (9:00 am) begins June 4, 2023. A breakfast will follow the first Sunday of the summer schedule.



It has pleased Almighty God in his infinite mercy to call to is nearer presence the soul of the Reverend Dr. Frederick J. Schumacher. Pastor Schumacher was a friend of Spruce Run church. He worked with Pastor Ettlemeyer to design Spruce Run's 225th anniversary medal and was also present at Pastor Ettlemeyer's last celebration of the Holy Eucharist in June 2019. "Eternal rest grant him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him."

[Commemorative Medal](#)

[Obituary for Reverend Dr. Frederick J. Schumacher](#)

Spruce Run Lutheran Church **Milestones**

We celebrate the baptism of Calvin Joseph Peare.

We celebrate the baptism of Blake Quinn Mansilla.

We celebrate the baptism of Kelly Ye.



At the congregational meeting we mentioned holding local, small group, "Cottage Meetings" to socialize and discuss our ministry. We have three upcoming opportunities:

Friday June 23rd, 7 to 9 pm:

Dessert and coffee with Candy Peare

103 S. Honeyman Rd, Whitehouse Station

908-534-9862

Saturday July 8th, 4 to 6 pm:

Pizza and beer with Polly Tyndall

48 New St., Hampton

908-305-8780

Saturday July 15th, 8 to 10 am:

Breakfast at the Henriksen Household

155 Mountain Top Rd, Lebanon Twp (Washington)

908-835-9522

Space is limited, so please make your choice and RSVP at your earliest convenience.

Any questions or you would like to host, please contact Erik.



Volunteers sort the donations from Scouting for Food at the pantry.



WELCA Mystery Trip to
Hunterdon Hills Playhouse
"Million Dollar Quartet"

SAVE THE DATE!!!

We will be worshipping outdoors
with our friends from
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
on
Sunday, July 30th at 9:30 am
&
Sunday, August 20th at 9:30 am

at Finn Road Park
36 Finn Rd, Pittstown, NJ 08867

SUMMER SCHEDULE & BREAKFAST!

Worship will begin
at 9 AM starting
June 4th!



Join us after
worship on June
4th for breakfast.

GAME NIGHT

Join us for food, fun & fellowship!



June 9th
July 14th
August 11th

6 - 8 pm



CARRIAGE HOUSE LEARNING

The Didache

June 8, 15, 22, and 29

7 - 8 pm

WISDOM FROM SPRUCE RUN

July 12, 19, and 26

7 - 8 pm

Our Mission

For over two centuries, Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church has existed to draw people into a community of faith which proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

As we move into the next century, our sense of hope, strength, and grace—our Lutheran heritage—will nurture our Congregation and we will reach out to the community through Christian education, music, and service.

Fellowship

Spruce Run Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church
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Lebanon Township
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826-3252

www.SpruceRunLutheran.com



“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

Isaiah 40:8

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