

# The Transformer

July 2011

717-866-4910

*Friedens (Peace) Lutheran Church, 301 W. Washington Ave., Myerstown, PA*

*...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...*  
(Ephesians 4:12)

We (Simon, Thea, and I) rode our bikes over to the Jackson Playground on Monday morning. The Parks and Recreation Summer Playground Program provides a great opportunity for children 6-14 years old. Since the playground is only half a mile from our house, it makes for a nice bike ride over and back.

Simon loves going. His favorite game to play is Capture-the-Flag. Thea is not old enough to be left there alone for the program. So I went planning to stay, taking a book to read, while they played.

After a few rounds of Capture-the-Flag the kids decided to play Kickball and they invited me to join them. So I did. I was honored to be invited. I was old enough to be a grandfather for many of them. What a sobering thought. But I didn't dwell on that fact.

We started playing Kickball with 22 players – 11 on a team. We had a lot of fun. I felt like a kid again. The energy was high at the beginning of the game with a lot of excitement. But I noticed that as the game wore on, the excitement faded and the energy waned. I wondered why – too much down time.

Of course, I also noticed that kids at that age can be pretty mean to one another. When someone made a mistake, the name-calling was very hurtful. At one point the other team didn't like how our pitcher was rolling the ball. They started chanting for a new pitcher. The look of devastation in our pitcher's eyes was heart-breaking.



I decided to change the culture of the game by encouraging and coaching all the players. I started using words like "Take your time," "Good kick," or "Nice catch," or "Try again." Pretty soon the name calling stopped, the negative chanting stopped, and the kids started offering support to one another. It was an amazing experience of transformation. What I said and did changed the culture of that game. And other players started changing it for the better too.

It dawned on me while playing Kickball, that as the church we ought not avoid the culture, we ought to shape the culture. We are invited to get into the game of life not to be culture resisters but culture reformers. But that's a topic for another time...

As we continued playing Kickball I noticed that players on both teams would walk off the field to go do something else. At one point our team headed back out into the field with only four players, over half our team was MIA. I looked around and wondered where they all went. They chose to leave, which changed the game along with the energy and excitement in a negative way. Those who stayed in the game enjoyed it, but the game had certainly changed.

At one point three of our players went over to the swings while the rest of us went out into the field. When it was our turn to kick, they came back and wanted to join in the game again. They didn't like being in the field.

(continued next page)

It was too hot and boring. They informed me. I found it odd that they wanted to play the game – but only the part they liked playing.

It dawned on me how we have become a pick and chose society often changing how we participate according to our whims and wishes. But that’s a topic for another time too...

After the game ended with only 4 players on a team, we congratulated one another and made our way to get a drink of water. I was looking forward to getting back to reading my book but Simon came running over to me and suggested that we play Street Hockey. So we did, just he and me, batting the ball around. It was a great father and son time together.

Then the game changed. After a few minutes Kyle joined us. Then Jason and Mike joined in, then Jerry, then three more boys. Each time someone joined us, the game changed. It changed for the better. The energy and excitement increased. The game got more interesting each time we added a player or two and we had to clarify the rules as we went along. The game continued to change and so too did the rules. And that was a good thing.

The dynamics of the Hockey game was completely opposite to that of the Kickball game. With Kickball, we started with a big group but then players began to leave and the energy decreased. With Hockey, we started with a few players and as the game continued more players joining in the game and the energy increased. At one point we even had a few players sitting on the bench waiting as substitutes.

It was a fascinating for me to compare the dynamics of these two games -- Kickball and Street Hockey. Even though we enjoyed playing both games, Simon and I agreed that it was a lot more fun playing Hockey than it was playing Kickball.



I wonder if this isn’t a great metaphor for “the game” we are trying to play at Friedens. I wonder if we are trying to play “Kickball” when it would be a lot more fun and exciting to play “Hockey.” That’s the difference between membership and discipleship.

The “game” of membership in the church is when people tend to leave picking and choosing how to participate according to one’s whims and wishes. When it gets boring (interpret as ‘not being played the way I think it should be played’) we leave. The membership “game” tends to repel people.

On the other hand in the “game” of discipleship, we focus on helping one another grow in the faith, equipping one another for works of service all the while building up the body of Christ. The “game” of discipleship tends to attracts people as we enjoying the game together, welcoming and making room for those who want to play the “game” too.

The “game” we are playing at Friedens is changing and so too are the rules. And that is a very good thing. See you on the playground.

Peace,

Pastor Miller

# JULY 2011

| Sun   | Mon       | Tue  | Wed                            | Thu  | Fri   | Sat       |
|---|-----------|--|--------------------------------|--|---|-----------|
|   |           |  |                                |  | <b>1 Pastor Miller on vacation till July 11.</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>3</b><br>9 AM—<br>Contemporary<br>Worship<br>10:30 AM—<br>Traditional Worship  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b><br><br>7 PM—LIFE<br>Group—Parlor                                | <b>6</b>                       | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>10</b><br>9 AM—<br>Contemporary<br>Worship<br>10:30 AM—<br>Traditional Worship | <b>11</b> | <b>12</b><br>7 PM—Property<br>Committee<br><br>7 PM—LIFE<br>Group—Parlor | <b>13</b><br>9 AM—Women<br>Sew | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b><br>Deadline for<br>Transformer articles | <b>16</b> |
| <b>17</b><br>9 AM—<br>Contemporary<br>Worship<br>10:30 AM—<br>Traditional Worship | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b><br>6:30 PM—Finance<br>Team<br><br>7 PM—LIFE<br>Group—Parlor    | <b>20</b>                      | <b>21</b><br>Noon—Senior Fest<br><br>6:45 AM—Church<br>Council | <b>22</b>   | <b>23</b> |
| <b>24</b><br>9 AM—<br>Contemporary<br>Worship<br>10:30 AM—<br>Traditional Worship | <b>25</b> | <b>26</b><br><br>7 PM—LIFE<br>Group—Parlor                               | <b>27</b><br>9 AM—Women<br>Sew | <b>28</b><br><br>7 PM—Anniversary<br>Committee                 | <b>29</b>   | <b>30</b> |
| <b>31</b><br>9 AM—<br>Contemporary<br>Worship<br>10:30 AM—<br>Traditional Worship |           |  |                                |  |   |           |





### 2011 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Representatives: Pastor Miller, Joanne Maurer, Frank Armstrong

We, the representatives from Friedens Lutheran Church, arrived on the site for the Synod Assembly at Messiah College early Friday morning. The weather was supremely pleasant and the campus of Messiah College complimented the weather. What a beautiful, serene place of education and enlightenment.

There were so many attending that it was difficult to keep our group together. The halls were packed with clergy and lay people maneuvering toward the entrances to the meeting. I thought I'd yell, "Hey Pastor wait for me!"...but I knew about 50 men and women in black would turn to see who was calling them.

After registering, receiving our information packets, and most valuable of all—a meal ticket—we entered to search for seats. We found our only chance of getting a seat was to separate, two in one aisle and one in another.

Just as we sat the keynote speaker was being introduced. She was Dr. Lisa Bonds and she spoke on world hunger. I must say her presentation of a video showing needy children along with her narration gave everyone there an "appetite" to help.

The next speaker, Rev. Michael Cooper-White, spoke about the Gettysburg Seminary. He related how historic the seminary is—one of its leaders was instrumental in having President Lincoln sign the Emancipation Proclamation. Then he and his group has us in stitches with their rendition of "The Hallelujah Chorus" played on kazoos.

At lunch we sat with a group of Messiah students. Each told us about themselves and their hopes and aspirations. They were surprisingly focused on their goals. I only wish I was as sure and confident when I was that age. They made you proud of our young people and secure about our country's future.

The afternoon session was dominated by a discussion of a resolution submitted for the Assembly's vote. The resolution basically was to enable the Synod to help the Palestinians create, through entrepreneurship, a basis for future statehood...this to be established without slighting the Israeli. A serious and lively discussion ensued. For such a volatile subject, one would surely witness loudness, possibly tempers or impoliteness...but none of that happened. Each gave their view (pro or con) and parliamentary rules were followed explicitly. This synod is populated by even-tempered, thoughtful, polite and genuinely nice people.

Attending this Assembly was a rewarding, illuminating and exciting experience. There were times during the meeting and also communicating with many people that gave me the urge to shout out "You make me proud to be a Lutheran." But I didn't...we Lutherans are never ostentatious.



**DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP**

In our summer LIFE group we are studying a discipleship, last week we talked about the fact that God loves us just the way we are. That got me to thinking.....just the way we are ....can you even begin to wrap your brain around how many people there are in the world ??? I looked it up and the United States Census Bureau estimates there are 6.92 billion people living in the world. That’s a lot of people with different personalities, gifts, talents, etc; and God not only has the *capability* to love us, but he does it whether we care or not. He loves us all !!! All 6.92 billion of us, how cool is that????

So we gather together to grow in Christ to be disciples of Jesus Christ, that means we are to let the Holy Spirit train and transform us to *do life* as He did. As we are digging into this study it is also clear that much has been written about the cost of discipleship, the price of pursuing spiritual growth. It’s important for us to count the cost but it’s *just* as important to know the value of what you get in return. So what do we get in return for following Christ ??? Some would say peace, joy, patience (fruits of the spirit) but isn’t it more that that??? I would say it’s everything! The cost of discipleship is everything.... It means putting aside our agendas and being open to His. It means loving others the way He loves us. It means serving others *not* just the people under our noses but the people in this world that so desperately need our help and could use a hug from God. How often do we use the term “ We are to be the hands and feet of Christ”.

We all know what we can do when we pull together as a *group* of disciples. But what about when it’s just you..... are you making the most out of all the opportunities Christ lays before you??? I know I’m not. But I also know God loves me, He knows my limitations and to Him I am a work of His hands. I am so very thankful that my heavenly father has patience as I continue to grow. I’m sure you’ve heard the metaphor “dying unto ourselves”. Yes the cost of discipleship is high. But Jesus offers a *vision* for the value of discipleship, the vision of who we can become as we continue our pursuits of discipleship. For me the real question is..... what are the costs of non- discipleship??? I don’t know about you..... but for me that’s not a cost I’m willing to pay.

Christ’s Peace, Valerie

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**  
Senior Fest will be held on Thursday, July 21 at noon.



| <b>OUR TITHES &amp; OFFERINGS</b> |       |             |               |              |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>May 2011</b>                   |       |             |               |              |
|                                   |       |             |               | % of Budget  |
| Current Budget                    | Goal  | \$29,428.00 | Goal to Date  | \$147,140.00 |
| \$353,139.00                      | Rec’d | \$26,029.00 | Rec’d to Date | 125,017.00   |
| Spang Crest                       | Rec’d | 28.00       | Rec’d to Date | 384.00       |
| Hunger                            | Rec’d | 335.00      | Rec’d to Date | 1,873.00     |





On Sunday, July 3, food will be collected for the Lebanon County Food Bank. All gifts are welcomed. There is a need for instant mashed potatoes, canned potatoes, cold cereal, 18 oz. jams & jellies, 5 oz. canned chicken, 12 oz. Spam, toothpaste, toothbrushes and toiletries.



### **THANK YOU, GOD!**

What an incredible week of vacation bible school! We were blessed to have 64 children from our church and community gather to experience the love of God during a week filled with music, fun and faith. "Thank you, God!" was our response phrase to each evening's bible point. I thank God for the children who attended VBS and came to know that God really is wild about us! I thank God for all the parents, grandparents, aunt/uncles and neighbors who brought the children to VBS each night so that the children might grow in their faith. I thank God for all the individuals who helped make this year's VBS a success. I thank you for giving your time, talent and resources both before and during the week of VBS. Your service made this a memorable week for the children as they continue on their faith journey. In the words of Matthew 25:21, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Blessings,  
Amber Miller

**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRAISE & WORSHIP LEADER:** "Do you know someone who is friendly? Plays the violin? The acoustic guitar? The drums? Sounds like Chris Tomlin or Amy Grant when they sing? Are you looking to lend your musical gifts and serve in the music worship ministry? The Praise and Worship Band is looking for individuals who fit any of the above descriptions. Maybe you want to lend your talents for a weekend, the Summer. We require that those who have committed to serve in the Worship ministry faithfully fulfill that commitment, making themselves available for scheduled Wednesday rehearsals and weekend services.

If you meet the above requirements, or know someone that does, I encourage you to contact Gloria Horn at 228-3663. When we worship, we offer the very best of ourselves to God.

## *CHILDREN'S MINISTRY*

This is the third newsletter for Children's Ministry. Unfortunately time got ahead of me and we did not have a June newsletter. My apologies! This newsletter will cover July and August. Schedules are completed through January 2012. If you need any changes contact a team member. I have emailed and handed out schedules. There are also copies on the bulletin board.

We have had great feedback about the change. The older children are more engaged in learning. Thanks to everyone who has made this possible, especially the teachers who have gone the extra mile and found additional resources to their lesson plans. Throughout the summer we want to hear from you so we continue to make changes in developing a program that helps the children grow and develop their faith.

Just an update....we will have the lessons and lesson bags in the blue and yellow rooms either on windowsills or the floor. Children should be escorted from the sanctuary after the Children's Message by teachers and helpers. The ushers will then alert you when the end of service or communion is close at hand. You should then escort the children back to the sanctuary. If your lesson runs long the children would remain with you until their parents arrive or be escorted to the sanctuary.

Nursery teachers please try to arrive 5-10 minutes before service starts. If no children are present when service begins please stay in the room until after the Children's Message. Some nursery age children may come to the nursery after the message. If there are still no children for nursery you can help the other teachers or go to service.

For the elementary children the individual posters can always be worked on especially as it fits into the weekly lesson plan. Throughout the summer we will try to make sure all children have posters and journals. I am putting together a file box for journals. Journal materials and individual journals can be kept here. We have encouraged the children to take home and bring back their journals so that during the week they can read their Bible verses with their families and complete any assignments given to them. If they do not want to take home their journals, time in class can be devoted to updating journals.

Thanks for all your hard work in this great Mission!

Lynn

Please contact the team with any questions or problems: Jill Kreider, Missy Krause, Amber Miller, Lynn Appleby

### **Scripture Lessons for July and August**

July 3—Isaiah 6:1-8

July 10—2 Chronicles 34:1-33

July 17—Daniel 3:1-30

July 31—Jeremiah 29:4-14

August 7—Nehemiah 1:1—2:9

August 14—Nehemiah 2:11—6:19

August 21—Esther 2-9

August 28: Job 1:1-2:10; 42:1-6, 10-17





Report on Mission 2011

**“TWENTY FOR TENN.”**

Twenty for ten are terrific odds if one was a betting person. But this was not a gambling excursion. This was a mission trip of twenty volunteers to Nashville, Tennessee. It was the site of a devastating flood along the Cumberland River.

The volunteers gathered in the parking lot behind our church on June 12th for an early start to Tennessee...coincidentally known as the volunteer state. So early it was still dark! The parking lot lights, an occasional flash light and the headlights of vehicles dropping off volunteers illuminated the faces of those preparing to leave and those relatives and friends wishing them well on their trip.

Soon three vans were packed with luggage, sleeping equipment, tools and especially the volunteers. At 4:00 A.M. the vans pulled out of the church grounds and began the trip through Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and into Tennessee.

The trip took fourteen hours. It seemed an eternity till we arrived at our destination. The accommodations were luxurious compared to previous missions. There were adequate rooms with bunks, mattresses and three baths. Therefore a trip to the YMCA to shower was unnecessary.

One team of workers was sent to strip a house of everything...walls, floors, ceilings, toilet, bathtub, even the kitchen sink. We filled two large dumpsters with the debris and got scraped, bruised and very dirty in the process.

Another team went to a house needing the finishing talents of workers who could install flooring, baseboards, tile and kitchen counter tops. What a terrific job they did! That house looked like an illustration from “House Beautiful.”

A third team tackled a house needing wallboard installation, spackling, electrical work and sanding. That was a huge job. A devastated ground floor of a home was made whole again. A testament to the abilities of a very talented work crew.

Later in the week some of our mission team were sent to paint some rooms of a house nearly refurbished. Not an easy assignment for anyone like me, who advertises the colors chosen all over my face and clothes.

Together this team of missionaries arrived at a devastated area and left it in a vastly improved condition. We hope these hands and feet of God’s volunteers have given evidence that love, hope and faith are alive and well at Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA.

Submitted by Frank Armstrong

