

# Crescent Connections

Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church

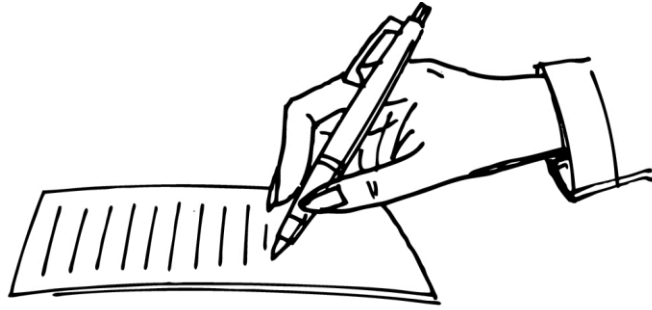
March – April 2015



716 Watchung Ave  
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[www.crescentonline.org](http://www.crescentonline.org)

Pastor: Rev Lynn Santulli



## *From the* **Pastor**

As a recent fortune cookie message once quipped, "Everyone loves progress, Nobody likes change." It

sounds good, at least as far as fortune cookie wisdom goes, but I don't think it always proves true. At least that is what I have found since being at Crescent. It is true that not everything has been clear sailing, but that we have hoisted sails and are certainly on the move (to switch metaphors in midstream) would hardly be argued.

There are many things happening. Some really great things. A new ministry has emerged which feeds hungry and homeless on Tuesdays that has proven to be a powerful and engaging ministry. It has attracted much attention outside of our stone walls and people are looking anew at our congregation. We are perhaps as well. A tremendous amount of work has been accomplished in refurbishing our church house (some yet to go) and we will soon be setting our sights on working on restoring the sanctuary as well (but that is getting ahead of myself a bit).

The question, as with any church community, is to navigate embracing the best of the traditions and legacies left to us by previous workers in God's vineyard, and be open to the changes that God is leading us into so that the work may continue. Our ministry leaders are becoming discerners of the Spirit, learning how to recognize when God is moving in our midst and when it is our personal agendas. We have explored the notion of rowboat ministries versus sailboat ministries (ask any of our elders and they will be happy to share with you what is the difference and how you can tell!).

Where other congregations may struggle with that shoal upon which many creative idea has foundered, 'We have never done it like that before.' I can

honestly say I have never encountered that at our church. Instead there is an openness ("Let's try it"), and excitement ("That sounds interesting/fun") and an energy ("I will help..."). More people have become more involved in more ministries and missions. The good thing is that the same people are still involved while some new people are getting involved. We are growing in the right direction.

It takes a while to grow into change. When I first came on board I felt a bit like the captain of the Titanic, fearful that the iceberg looming ahead would take us down. You don't turn an ocean liner on a dime, and you don't transform a church such as Crescent overnight. And yet I have seen God's hand at work in our midst in so many ways.

If you haven't been to Crescent in a while, we hope you will come back and visit us. There is much good news we would like to share with you and have you see for yourself. If you have been at Crescent, you know that there is a lot going on and in this edition of *The Messenger* and future ones, we hope you will get a chance to catch up on some of the great stuff that is happening in our midst. The Light of Christ shines brightly at CAPC and as I have been known to say, "We've left the light on for you." We hope you will come home soon!

Blessings,

Pastor Lynn

Welcome to the newly named, hopefully timely and full of information Crescent Connections!

We welcome your comments and suggestions as we launch this project. The goal is to bring information to all our members so you will know what is going on at your church and can invite your friends to be a part of our worship and events!

Please feel free to email me with suggestions:

JulieDowning@icloud.com

Each edition will have a focus on a particular committee or church member as well as have the events that are scheduled for the months following.

Our church has evolved in so many ways! Rooms continue to be cleaned and brightened and our rental revenue is up, which means more folks know about our amazing church. The soup kitchen is in full swing and is much appreciated by many clients each Tuesday. And most importantly, we've had our first full year with our hard working and much loved Pastor Lynn.

As with all churches, our faith in God is what binds us together, but it's our faith in each other that will hold us together. As we head into 2015, lets call on each other, old friends and new, to take on new tasks and help with events. Many hands make light work. As I once read from a 19<sup>th</sup> century writer, "If there be a faith that can move mountains, it is faith in ones own power".

Julie Downing  
Editor



## ***March and April Worship***

**Palm Sunday – March 29 – 10:30 am – Sanctuary** – palm branches waving, special music playing and joyous worship heralds our celebration of the coming of Christ into Jerusalem.

**Maundy Thursday, April 3 – 7:30 pm – Sanctuary** – Join us for a special worship service whose roots go back to the beginning of Christian history. This service includes the serving of Communion and is a prayerful thanksgiving for the gift of this incredible sacrament in our lives.

**Good Friday, April 4 – Tenebrae Service – 7:30 pm - Sanctuary**– Crescent Concerts presents a powerful and moving worship experience as we journey into darkness and deep, prayerful reflection of God’s gift to us in Christ.

**Easter Sunday, April 5 – 10:15 am – Sanctuary** – The brass will be playing and the choir and everyone singing as we break open in celebration and praise for the gift of Easter. There is even a special Easter pen to be distributed after worship. Resurrection Egg Hunt scheduled for after worship.

## ***Devotion & Study***

**Adam Hamilton’s “24 Hours that Changed the World” Sunday mornings, 9 am February 22 – March 29** – No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Designed to help experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death in a way you have never done before. Whether long-time Christian or simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion, you are invited to join the author in retracing the last 24 hours of Jesus' life.

## ***Music***

**Sunday, March 8 – Festival of Organists**

– **3 pm – Sanctuary** -the organ has been and continues to be ‘instrumental’ in our worship. Come and enjoy this festival of talented musicians as they offer their best pieces on our mighty 97-rank Adams organ, one of the largest in NJ. The console will be on a platform in full view for the audience. An event not to be missed! Additional info at: <http://crescentconcerts.org>



## **March and April Birthdays**

### March

3 Ursula Fleck  
4 F. Allen Artz, III  
10 Anna Dunchus  
23 Nina Buck  
27 Ron Maltby

### April

2 Betsy Herman  
4 Harry (T) Osborne  
7 Brianna Baker  
30 Janet Ramsey  
30 Gaby Trepper

# PRAYER

*changes things*

For Health:

Sal Badalamenti; Rev. Russell Block; Susan Carmen; Don Easum; Valarie & Rick Fisher; Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Frank; George Germinder; Walter Hartel; Jim & Winnie Hendry; Erin Marshall; Melissa Stampoulis; Mr & Mrs. Jonathan Stevens; Richard Furbeck

For Homebound

Sonia Cook; Joann; Bella Lissinna; Betsy Ruff;  
Lodis Mae Shedrick; Bernice Swain

For Concern:

All those who serve our country so we may enjoy peace

## Easter Word Search

Find all these Easter words in the grid - they run in straight lines, in any direction.  
The leftover letters spell out an Australian Easter-time event.



ASCENSION  
BAKING  
BASKET  
CHICKS  
CHOCOLATES  
CHURCH BELLS  
COOKING  
DAFFODILS  
DISHES  
EASTER BILBY  
EASTER MASS  
EGG DYE  
EGG HUNT  
GIVES  
GOOD FRIDAY  
GREETING CARDS  
HIDE  
HOLIDAY  
HOLY WEEK  
HOT CROSS BUNS  
HYMNS  
JESUS  
LAMB  
LILY  
PALM LEAVES  
RABBIT  
REBIRTH  
ROAST  
SPRING  
VIGIL

Have fun each month with a word search or crossword puzzle. Any good, clean jokes, let us know!





OUR CHURCH FAMILY  
Jeffrey H. Downing Profile:

**1 Peter 4:10**

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to **serve others**, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Jeff was born and raised in Ocean Grove (OG), NJ, "God's Square Mile". His Dad was raised in OG, 2 blocks from the ocean, though he never learned how to swim. His Mom was a PK, preacher's kid, and traveled across NJ with her family. The Methodist churches included ones in Scotch Plains and Bound Brook. His parents still reside in OG and are very active in the community.

Jeff was an active member of St. Paul's UMC and youth group growing up. During the summer he was very involved in the OG Camp Meeting Association where he participated in youth programs and starting ushering at the Great Auditorium (built in 1891) at the age of 14 and continues that family tradition today (Dad for over 65 years and Brian ushers too). Jeff graduated from Neptune High School, where he played the trumpet in the marching band and concert band (French horn too) and played tennis and swam on the swim team. His part time jobs included cutting lawns, odd jobs, hotel boy, working at the Sampler Inn Cafeteria (where is Dad worked when he was a teenager and also when Jeff's younger brother worked as well). Jeff also had summer internships with Continental Insurance in their IT department and of coursed served as a lifeguarded on the beaches of OG.



Jeff attended Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA and majored in Computer Science. He sang in three (3) choirs, one being the Tour Choir. This group of 40 students traveled each spring break to perform concerts from New England to Florida and west to Chicago. Being part of this great organization allowed him to establish and foster lasting friendships and bring his singing to the next level. He went on to Fairleigh Dickinson University for a Masters in Computer Science.

Jeff was hired by the Department of Army, Fort Monmouth, NJ as a computer scientist and worked for the Software Engineering Center for 24 years. The most exciting position he had was being the Deputy for Battlespace Systems where he was responsible for intelligence, communications, electronic warfare and fire support software systems. He had offices in Germany, South Korea, Arizona and Oklahoma. After the Army, Jeff had the opportunity to transfer to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Eatontown, NJ, and has been there for over five (5) years. He is currently the Director of Operations for the Technology Acquisition Center.

As you know he is happily married for over 27 years to Julie (Wilcox). Julie and Jeff met at Lycoming via the choir connection and started dating after graduation. They have lived over these years in Somerville, Fanwood, Scotch Plains, Plainfield and have been

summering in OG for the last seven (7) years in a tent. He has had the opportunity to really keep his extended family close in the Plainfield area and down in the OG area. His son Brian graduated from the Wardlaw Hartridge School, Edison and he is a junior at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, majoring in Economics.

Jeff enjoys volunteering and embraces the opportunity to serve. Jeff serves as the Vice-President of the Fanwood Rescue Squad and the OG First Aid Squad, and is on the Fanwood Fire Department as well. He is a sitting Elder for CAPC, serving as the Chairperson of Personnel and a member of Worship, Music and the Arts; and he formerly served as a Deacon. He is an Associate Trustee of the OG Camp Meeting Association when he is a member of the Operations Committee. He is a Section Director of the OG Auditorium Ushers Association. When time permits he enjoys playing golf with Brian or the Badalamenti's.

Jeff became a member of Crescent in 1988 and quickly became a Deacon and years later began serving as an Elder. He has been called on to contribution in many of the areas of CAPC. He loves the music program and the worship service, maintaining a traditional view of worship, though enjoying current contemporary Christian music as well.

## **Crescent Ave Session:**

### **Five Major Objectives for 2014.2015**

1. To grow the church both numerically in the number of members but, perhaps more importantly, spiritually as we endeavor to provide opportunities for people to discern God's call upon their lives and live into the call to discipleship.
2. Improve communication with all members and the larger community to ensure that people are aware of all that is happening at CAPC and how they can become involved in the life of the church.
3. Educate, inform, and collaborate with the congregation in exploring the theme of "Setting our sails to follow Christ" so everyone can be aware of how Christ is calling our congregation and the shift in vision and plans we feel are led by the Holy Spirit.
4. Improve the policies, procedures, structures and staffing of key areas so that the administration of the church better reflects the goals of the Session , improves the experience the community has of CAPC and more firmly supports the ministries and missions of the church.
5. Continue to explore, build and enhance the children and youth ministries of the church and encourage greater strength of families to minister to all ages, but especially the youngest in our midst.



## Session Highlights (Our Committees in Brief)

### **Buildings & Grounds:** (Co-Chairs Joan Van Pelt and Nicholas Stevens)

- With the winter storms continuing to bear down on us, a snowblower was needed to help clear our walkways. (The cost was \$900 and donations are very welcome as we had not planned on this expense.)
- Henry Ward has been VERY hard at work stripping the 40+ years of wax buildup. This is an arduous process, but much needed as a number of contractors were recommending removing the floor (egads!). Thank you, Henry, for your hard work on this project!
- A renovation project for the kitchen is under evaluation and a committee has been formed to explore funding, plans, utilization, etc. More on this will be reported in future newsletters!
- Repair was made to choir room roof which should eliminate leaks and will restore outside to historical guidelines (copper versus aluminum)

### **Finance:**

- We continue to carefully manage and examine our financial results and work towards the goal of someday producing a budget that does not depend on draws from the endowment fund. We are making progress on this front and certainly the improvements in the building have yielded an increase in rentals.
- Members are being asked to contribute towards their per capita. This is the fee paid to the denomination and is part of the 'cost' of being Presbyterian. Per capita fee is \$36.87, checks can be made out to CAPC and indicate per capita in the memo field.

### **Membership & Evangelism:**

- Outreach to members and friends of the congregation who have not been attending is underway as we invite people to come and experience the 'new' CAPC. We are also increasing our advertising to the community and looking for ways to share the great things happening in our midst. Check us out at [crescentonline.org](http://crescentonline.org) and 'like' us on Facebook!

### **Mission:**

- The Soup Kitchen distributed coats to our guest on Tuesday, February 3rd. Thanks to the efforts of two young men (Ryan Vincent and Adam Gold of Scotch Plains who went door to door requesting coat donations) all of our soup kitchen guests were able to get a coat. Thank you notes were sent to

both of these young men. We discussed providing baby kits and gloves for the pantry which would be distributed as needed/requested.

- The committee discussed and felt very strongly we should explore perhaps partnering with Star Fish year round, not just at Thanksgiving.
- Mission continues to be at the heart of CAPC and a full calendar of fund raisers and mission outreach is planned for 2015.

### **Christian Education & Nurture:**

- An updated Child Protection Policy was approved and will be rolled out over the next several months. This is a major step forward in our Children's Ministry
- CEN is exploring offering an outstanding VBS program in July that will be led by staff from Camp Johnsonburg. Local churches and families in the surrounding area and beyond will be invited to participate.
- Finally, Deidra reported that \$317.92 was collected for the Souper Bowl of Caring. The final total for the December Heifer market was \$945. This year, in addition to animals and birds, tree seedling packets and two biogas stoves were purchased.

### **Personnel:**

- You have probably heard by now that we installed Reverend Lynn Santulli as pastor of CAPC. In addition, we have hired Stephanie DeGeneste as our Director of Children's Ministry. With staff securely in place, it has allowed us to plan and move forward in concrete ways to begin building the ministries and missions of our congregation.



# The Belhar Confession

Submitted by Andre McIntyre

Rooted in the unity of all races, the Belhar Confession says that unity is both a gift and obligation for the church. The [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) considered adopting the Belhar Confession. In 2008, a Committee from the 218th General Assembly requested that a committee begin the formal process of including the Belhar in its [Book of Confessions](#). That committee recommended adoption of the Belhar Confession to the 219th General Assembly in 2010. The General Assembly approved the recommendation and referred adoption to a vote of the Presbyteries. In 2014, the 221st General Assembly approved the new committee's recommendation to refer adoption to a new vote by the Presbyteries.

This summer, I plan to visit South Africa to learn how this confession has impacted the lives of the citizens and its impact on the relationship between Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and the United Reformed Church of South Africa. Special thanks to my daughter's Godfather, Edwin Perry-Saabir for his contribution to this article.

## Prologue

The Belhar Confession has its roots in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa. This "outcry of faith" and "call for faithfulness and repentance" was first drafted in 1982 by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) under the leadership of Allan Boesak. The DRMC took the lead in declaring that apartheid constituted a status confessionis in which the truth of the gospel was at stake.

The Dutch Reformed Mission Church formally adopted the Belhar Confession in 1986. It is now one of the "standards of unity" of the new Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA). Belhar's theological confrontation of the sin of racism has made possible reconciliation among Reformed churches in Southern Africa and has aided the process of reconciliation within the nation of South Africa.

Belhar's relevance is not confined to Southern Africa. It addresses three key issues of concern to all churches: unity of the church and unity among all people, reconciliation within church and society, and God's justice. Belhar is currently being studied by a number of Reformed churches. As one member of the URCSA has said, "We carry this confession on behalf of all the Reformed churches. We do not think of it as ours alone."

# Confession of Belhar

## September 1986 <sup>1</sup>



1. **We believe** in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.
2. **We believe** in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

### **We believe**

- that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity;
- that this unity can be established only in freedom and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God;
- that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church;

### **Therefore, we reject any doctrine**

- which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation;
- which professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one

# Confession of Belhar

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- another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation;
- which denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin;
  - which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the
  - church.

### 3. We believe

- that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;
- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial
- work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;
- that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by
- appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

### Therefore, we reject any doctrine

- which, in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.

### 4. We believe

- that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged
- that God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
- that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;
- that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in



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- their suffering;
- that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;
  - that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;
  - that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

### **Therefore, we reject any ideology**

- which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

5. **We believe** that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence.

Jesus is Lord.

To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

### Note

<sup>1</sup>. This is a translation of the original Afrikaans text of the confession as it was adopted by the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa in 1986. In 1994 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa united to form the [Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa](#) (URCSA). This inclusive language text was prepared by the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA).

# Need a break from the



# frantic pace of life?

Sign up for the

## Oasis

Oasis is a weekday email devotional prepared by

Reverend Lynn Santulli

A word of Scripture, a brief reflection and a prayer

What better way to prepare yourself for a full day?

Sign up is easy: email [pastor@crescentonline.org](mailto:pastor@crescentonline.org) and enter 'Oasis' in the subject line. It's free and easy.

## Plans for the next edition:

Highlights of Christian Ed

Spotlight on a choir member!

Details on all the church committees, how many members they have, what they do and how you could help!

Summertime church service details