

God of Presence and Compassion

A reflection sermon based on Luke 7:11-17

The Gospel according to Luke tells us that Jesus was present and had compassion on a widow who was in distress. This poor woman was about to bury her only son, so he raises him from the dead.

Jesus stops the hearse, touches the coffin and says: "Young man, I say to you, rise!" Now, this could potentially have been the most embarrassing moment of Jesus' ministry, had the body of the boy not responded. After all, this was Jesus' first raise from the dead experience—it was pretty early in his ministry career. But of course, the boy did get up.

The fact that it mentions that the mourners were overcome with fear sounds realistic. Imagine you would witness something like this at a funeral you attend; imagine the corpse would start twitching, then sit up and start walking around. Joy would only set in after the initial shock. There are only few things creepier than the thought of a casket opening and a believed dead person to stagger out. This is the stuff that horror flicks are made of.

What does this story teach us? Well, for once this account shows how God comes through at a moment of great distress and human suffering in the life of a widow. It reveals God's heart, God's presence and compassion, love and care for...listen to this.... very common and ordinary people.

Widows in first-century Judea were women on the margin of society. Without a social security system in place, these people relied on their extended families for support which was often lacking due to the overall poverty of the common population. Again and again, we hear of poor widows in the OT as well as the NT, such as the poor widow who gave her "mite" into the temple treasury.

What really excites me about the account of the raising of the widow's son is the heart of Jesus which is revealed so beautifully here. Jesus probably just learned about the specifics of the death and about the mourning woman, perhaps from some bystanders. He was so gripped with compassion and love toward this woman that he spontaneously decided to intervene in a dramatic way.

He first comforts the woman and then he heals her son. The first words out of his mouth are: "do not weep." Do not weep. That's all he says. Powerful words, not to be confused with the similar words of a husband asking his wife: "o, please don't cry!"

I have to tell you, though, I got really excited about this story when I took my Greek bible out and looked up the actual word used to describe Jesus "compassion." It is the word *splagchnon*. It's not so much the sound of this word that excited me. That would be sad. But rather, the meaning of the term which, according to the dictionary is: one's innermost self or feelings, heart, affection, love and ...here it is: the word for entrails is related to the word compassion, perhaps best rendered in the English with "the pit of the stomach."

Have you ever experienced this sinking feeling in your stomach or your "entrails" when you heard really shocking news, perhaps about the illness or death of a loved one? Well that's the feeling Jesus experienced. Wow, he did not even know this woman, really. Just saw her for the first time and yet....he feels for her loss like she was his own family member.

Now that's the compassion of my Jesus. That's divine compassion like only God can have it for a perfect "stranger." We should praise God, for his presence and his compassion which is extended to each one of us too. The good news is that to Jesus all and any of us are family. He cares deeply for you and me and he cannot stand to see us suffering, sad or depressed. He feels our pain and he wants to help us too. May God presence and compassion cover you now and always. Amen.

LECTIONARY FOR JUNE

June 6

I Kings 17:8-24; Psalm 146
Galatians 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17

June 13

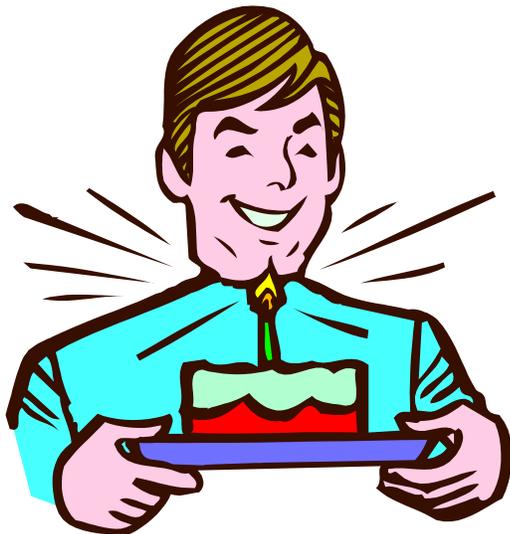
I Kings 21:1-21a; Psalm 5:1-8
Galatians 2:15-21; Luke 7:36, -8:3

June 20

I Kings 19:1-15a; Psalm 42
Galatians 1:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

June 27

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6 – 6-14; Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
Galatians 6:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62



HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAY TO:

<i>Philip Karpa</i>	3
<i>Jessica Faith Mannino</i>	4
<i>Brian Stamer</i>	7
<i>Lynette Joy Carhart</i>	9
<i>Glenn Curtin</i>	9
<i>Douglas Martinson</i>	13
<i>Dorothy Gerbounka</i>	18
<i>Katie Ann Gmitter</i>	23

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY TO:

<i>Karen S. Karpa</i>	2
<i>Rachael Hanns</i>	4
<i>Marie Dziamba</i>	5

<i>Brian Cocco</i>	7
<i>Arthur Huff</i>	8
<i>Christina Crespo</i>	9
<i>Doris Stamer</i>	10
<i>Matthew Henel</i>	14
<i>Jeanne Henel Moore</i>	18
<i>Debbie Stamer</i>	19
<i>Kaylee Zhanna Horne</i>	24
<i>Megan Ann Stamer</i>	25
<i>Mary Jane Koslosky</i>	26
<i>Tessa Henelsmith</i>	26
<i>Debbie Gmitter Horne</i>	30

HAPPY AUGUST BIRTHDAY TO:

<i>Mary Dalziel</i>	7
<i>Bill Chavan</i>	7
<i>Jayne Schnellenberger</i>	10
<i>Allison Schneider Blanford</i>	10
<i>Zachary Paul Blanford</i>	11
<i>Jason Schickel</i>	12
<i>Faith Hatherman</i>	12
<i>Alex Crespo</i>	14
<i>Karen Brinckmann</i>	15
<i>Tyler Horsch</i>	15
<i>Travis Horsch</i>	15
<i>Jayne Bittinger Cocco</i>	16
<i>Howard Martinson</i>	18
<i>Jamilla Lashley</i>	23
<i>Mary Barnes</i>	27
<i>Gertrude Baldwin</i>	28
<i>Todd Schickel</i>	28
<i>Miriam Hanns</i>	28
<i>Elizabeth Hanns</i>	29
<i>Karen Cammarata</i>	29
<i>Beatrice Bradford</i>	29

We are printing June, July and August birthdays at this time because there will not be a Messenger again until September. We hope all will have a wonderful birthday!!!



GOD MAY MEET YOU TODAY WHERE YOU

LEAST EXPECT IT.

This beautiful essay was written by Kaylee Horne, daughter of Debbie Horne, and granddaughter of Kathryn Gmitter. Kaylee won first place competing with 4th graders in East Brunswick, Edison, Helmetta, Metuchen, South River, Spotswood and her own school, Riley School in South Plainfield. The contest, "What My State Means to Me" was sponsored by the office of State Senator Barbara Buono for the 8th year. Senator Buono attended Kaylee's school and presented a \$50.00 check to her for her first place win. Congratulations, Kaylee!

Kaylee Horne – Feb. 9, 2010 LOCAL
STUDENT WINS 18th DISTRICT ESSAY
CONTEST

Want to know why New Jersey is very special to me? I was born in Plainfield, at Muhlenberg Hospital, and have lived in South Plainfield all my life. Most of my family lives in the state, too. New Jersey is the fourth smallest state and is about 150 miles long and 70 miles wide. For a state that small, it sure has a lot to offer.

There is a reason why New Jersey's nickname is "The Garden State". There are lots of gardens and farmlands in the state that grow crops such as vegetables, blueberries and peaches. Delicious! Besides farms, we have beautiful beaches, lakes, rivers, mountains, and hills, which allow us to do many fun things outside, like swim, boat and hike. New Jersey is not all farms and landforms either. There are urban and suburban areas, and Jerseyans are a short distance from New York City and Philadelphia. The more industrialized areas are where the population finds most jobs. It is easy to get to these places because most people have cars to drive on major and minor roads. Watch out for traffic jams! Public transportation helps to avoid those headaches.

The population of New Jersey is very diverse, with people from all over the world living in our state. Through them, we learn about other cultures, talking, tasting their food, and going to cultural events. What great ways to learn about the world and its people! There are lots of artistic performances too, such as movies, ballets, and concerts, that happen in our great state year round. Don't forget about history, because even George Washington came to New Jersey and fought Revolutionary War battles in our state!

Now you know why New Jersey, my home, is so special to me. The amazing sights, beautiful scenery, fresh produce, tasty food, and entertaining shows all add to the state's appeal. Besides, we have four seasons, which give us snow in the winter, warmth during the summer, and everything in between. If anyone visits New Jersey, they will fall in love with our great state!

Senator Barbara Buono with Kaylee Horne



Kaylee with her parents, Debbie & Bob Horne

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Our new schedule for the Administrative Council has worked well so far this year. Instead of meeting each month, we now only meet once every quarter – March, June, September and December. They are held on the second Wednesday of the scheduled month.

The June meeting will be WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9TH AT 7:00 P.M. IN ALDERSGATE HALL.

All chairpersons of church committees and the members of those committees are members of the Administrative Council. Since we only have four meetings yearly, it is important that we have a good turnout for this meeting.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND. IF TRANSPORTATION IS A PROBLEM, PLEASE CALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL SECRETARY, (Doris Henel - 486-5571) AND TRANSPORTATION WILL BE ARRANGED.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN GO OUT TO LUNCH!

The last meeting of the United Methodist Women until the fall, will be Tuesday, June 1st. They will leave for the Cottage Inn in Keyport around 11:15 a.m. for their favorite seafood luncheon. They have ended the season this way for a few years, and it is one that they look forward to very much.

Those providing transportation and the passengers in each car able to go are:

- MARYJANE KOSLOSKY
- Mary Dalziel
- Mildred Ebert

- Doris Stamer
- Ruth Schulte

DORIS HENEL

- Gertrude Baldwin
- Marie Dziamba

- Carolyn Franz
- Ethel Steiniger

.....and hopefully a good time will be had by all.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN,
NURTURE, WORSHIP AND ALL
CONCERNED MEMBERS OF OUR
CHURCH

With permission of his mother, Beatrice Bradford, we are undertaking various fund raising projects to help Mycroft, who has been fighting sickle cell anemia since he was a child. He is in and out of the hospital very often fighting to keep this terrible disease under control. It is possible that there might be help in other areas and we can help by raising money for him.

There is a money jar on the piano in the sanctuary that is being put out every Sunday for people to contribute their pocket change.

A coffee hour will be held on Sunday, May 23rd at which time people can put larger amounts in a basket for Mycroft. Checks can be made out to the United Methodist Women and it will be kept in a separate account until all fundraisers are complete. In the fall we will be having a large yard sale at the home of Lorraine & Bob Carhart. Save your items and plan to deliver them to the Carhart's home.

If you would like to donate money to this very worthwhile project, please mail a check to the church made out to the United Methodist Women, marked for Mycroft Laryea and it will put in the special account for him.





The Ecumenical Council around 1965.
in Aldersgate Hall.
Kip Lee Doug Lee Bob Schickel



The Ecumenical Council meets again on
April 17, 2010 in Aldersgate Hall
.Bob Schickel Doug Lee Todd Schickel Kip Lee

In the 1960's many young people formed their own bands. Our young people were no different. Bob Schickel, Doug Lee and Kip Lee (all members of our Methodist Youth Fellowship or our Boy Scout Troop #35) were the organizers of The Ecumenical Council which performed for the first time on the stage in Aldersgate Hall in the 60's. A few others joined the band at various times, but the original 3 were always there. Many a practice was held in Aldersgate Hall with loud sounds echoing throughout the building, and it was a fun and joyful time for all.

Forty-five years have passed and on April 16th and 17th they got together again – back in Aldersgate Hall where it all started. It wasn't a party – just old friends getting together and making some of that music that we all heard in those years gone by. Bob and Carol Schickel flew in from Chicago for this special gathering and old friends had a great time.

In the past year or so, they gathered at the home of Todd and Debbie Schickel, and last fall they met at Bob and Carol's lake house outside of Chicago. Next time they meet, (hopefully in the Hall), and you would like to hear some of the 60's music, come and listen and let it bring back memories of the "good old days".

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OUR SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We will continue meeting during June at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary as we have been doing all winter

On the first Sunday in July, (July 4) we will meet in Aldersgate Hall at 9:30 a.m. and continue meeting there at that time through August and Labor Day Weekend.

We will return to our winter schedule, in the sanctuary, on Sunday, September 12 at 10:30 a.m.

Make sure you list these dates and times on your calendar so that we will all join together at the right time for our Sunday worship services.

Remember – Aldersgate Hall is air conditioned so it will be very comfortable during our summer services.

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Rev. Ramos and Lorraine Carhart, our delegate to Annual Conference and Bob Carhart, alternate, will attend the Conference at Radisson Valley Forge Hotel in King of Prussia, Pa. on June 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

BITS AND PIECES

Norman and Joyce Carhart spent a week on a delightful cruise to Bermuda. Yes, Norman did gain weight, but within a week home he had lost it. That's a nice way to enjoy all the delicious food that is served on a cruise. – plan to lose the weight when you return. Or lose it before you go!

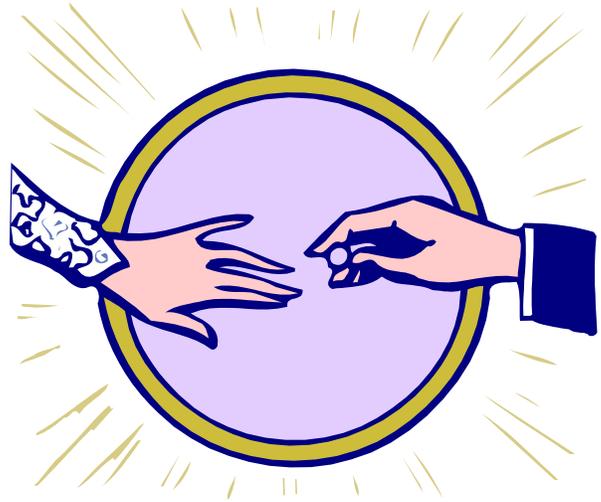
Jayne and Otts Schnellenberger drove up to New Jersey to join the Baldwin's and Steve and Sue Zahorbenski as they celebrated the graduation of their daughter, Laura Zahorbenski, from Raritan Valley College.. They will have to make the trip again because in a few years, the second daughter, Jennifer will be graduating from Rutgers University.
Congratulations, Laura!

Doris Henel will be flying to Denver, Colorado to join her son, John, wife, Julie and twins, Nina and Alec as they travel from California for the graduation of their daughter, Tessa, from the University of Denver. While there they will also have dinner with Joe and Tracy Cocco, Jayne Cocco's son and daughter-in-law who moved there about a year ago. It will be as mini-family reunion!
Congratulations, Tessa – and she has a job!

Sight and Sound in Lancaster, Pa. is a very popular place. Debbie Horne drove her mother, Kathryn Gmitter and Doris Stamer to see the new production of Joseph, which they enjoyed very much. On May 18th and 19th, Bob & Lorraine Carhart, Mildred Ebert, Ruth Schulte, MaryJane Koslosky, Mary Dalziel, Kathy Curtin, Doris Henel, Gertrude Baldwin, Bobbie Bogard and Carolyn Franz also drove to Lancaster to see that same production. They stayed overnight at the Bird in Hand Motel and did a little touring and shopping before returning home. They all had a great time!

Mail to Joy Hinkle has been returned. If you know of her whereabouts, please notify the church secretary.
We miss seeing Joy and her daughter Lisa McCracken and would love to have contact with them again.

Congratulations to Andrew Moore, son of Jeanne and Rob Moore, and grandson of Doris Henel. He has completed all the requirements and also his Eagle project and will receive his Boy Scout Eagle Scout Award at a Court of Honor on July 24, 2010.. He will also be graduating from High School in June and will be attending Penn State in the fall.



Nicole Scott and Patrick Vietello will be married on June 12, 2010 at the English Manor, Ocean, N.J. at 6 p.m. outside in the Gazebo. Following a cocktail hour there will be a dinner served in the lovely dining room.

The wedding party consists of Matron of Honor, Allyson Blanford, 6 bridesmaids and two flower girls. The flower girls are Nicole's niece, Madelyn Blanford and Patrick's niece, Madison Vietello.

They will honeymoon for ten days in Costa Rica. Our very best wishes to Nicole and Patrick. Nicole is a member of our church and the granddaughter of Lorraine and Bob Carhart.

A lovely shower was held for Nicole Scott on May 16th at her Aunt Donna's home in Scotch Plains. It was a beautiful day and a wonderful shower held outside in a lovely yard. Plants decorated each table in pink and black, which are the colors of the wedding. There were about 50 people at the shower and Nicole received many beautiful gifts.

JUNE 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 11:15 am – United Methodist Women Lunch at Cottage Inn 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch. 4:30-Weight Watchers	2 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch 4:30-Weight Watchers	3 11 AM – Bible Study 4:30-9:30-Fenc.Sch RADISSON ANNUAL	4 VALLEY FORGE CONFERENCE	5 9:30-1:30 - <i>Fencing School</i> HOTEL PA.
6 8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10 AM – Worship Ser	7 4:30-9:30-Fencing Sch.	8 4:30-9:30-Fencing School 4:30- 6:30-Weight Watchers in Aldersgate Hall	9 7 pm – Administrative Council – all attend in Aldersgate Hall 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	10 11- Bible Study 4:30-9:30-Fencing School	11	12 9:30-1:30 – Fencing School
13 8:30-Choir Rehearsal 10-Worship Service	14 4:30-9:30-Fencing School	15 Fenc. Sch. 4:30- 9:30 4:30-6:30-Weight Watchers in Aldersgate Hall	16 4:30-9:30-Fencing School	17 11 –Bible Study 4:30-9:30-Fencing School	18	19 9:30-1:30-Fencing School
20 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:00-Worship Service FATHER’S DAY	21 4:30 – 9:30 Fencing School	22 4:30 –9:30 Fencing Sch. 4:30-6:30-Weight Watchers in Aldersgate Hall	23 4:30-9:30 Fencing School	24 11 – Bible Study 4:30-9:30 Fencing Sch.	25	26 9:30-1:30 Fencing School
<u>27</u> 10:00 Worship Service	28 4:30-9:30 Fencing Sch.	29 4:30-9:30 Fencing Sch. 4:30-6:30 – Weight Watchers in Aldersgate Hall	30 4:30-9:30 Fencing Sch.			

NEXT SUNDAY: JULY 4 WE WILL WORSHIP IN ALDERSGATE HALL AT 9:30 A..M. AND CONTINUE ALL SUMMER AT THAT TIME. THE HALL IS AIR CONDITIONED! COME JOIN US!