

# Sharing God's Blessings in our Communities

from Disciplemaking and Spiritual Growth, Pittsburgh Presbytery  
*Growing, Serving, and Reaching Others for Christ.*

October 2011

## The Pittsburgh Project Service Camp 2011

Ken Mawr U.P. Church

Pastor Jim Kirk Associate Pastor, Discipleship

In June, nineteen high school students and five adults from Ken Mawr Presbyterian Church served in a local work camp through The Pittsburgh Project (TPP) on the North Side of Pittsburgh. Upon arrival on Sunday afternoon, we checked into our dormitory with 110 other youth from across the country. From there we traveled to our worksites which were assigned by TPP staff. That day, we met the homeowners that we would be serving for the next five days.

Each evening, the youth from Ken Mawr spent time with youth from four other work crews. This provided an opportunity to discuss what had happened that day and how we saw God at work. The youth shared stories about their daily experiences with homeowners and about the meaningful work they were doing.

Each summer, when our youth group participates in a work camp, we have an expectation that we will be serving people who are in need, and that does happen, but the unexpected happens when we are blessed and served by the people that we came to serve! During these intense days of work and building relationships, we grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. As the week progresses, we are transformed by our experience and by our time praying, building relationships and loving our new friends in Christ!

I was particularly blessed by our youth, adults and the homeowner, Rosie Gray, this year. Rosie lives in Wilksburg which is about 25 minutes from our church. Rosie is 85 years old and lives alone in an old, small, two-story house that was in need of several major repairs. Rosie has severe arthritis in both knees and cannot walk without pain. And yet, she has a strong belief that God is taking care of her and that "when God takes her home, she will find relief from all of her pains and rejoice in meeting God face-to-face!" Rosie was constantly thanking our crew and God for how our crew painted, repaired and generally improved her home! She thanks God every day in prayer and by reading God's holy word!

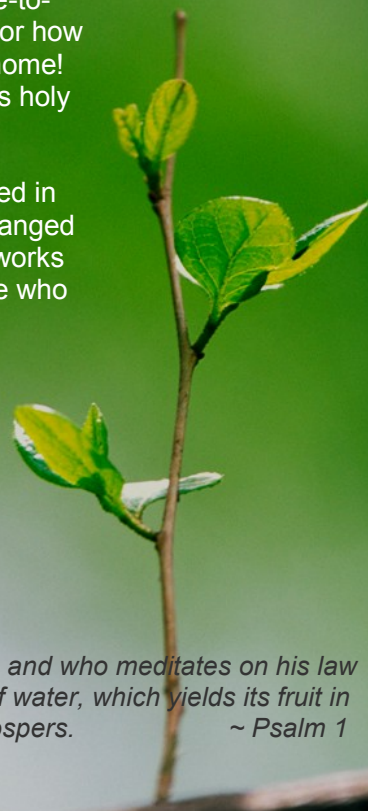
Every one of our students and adults who have participated in serving through The Pittsburgh Project came home as changed people! Both youth and adults recognized how the Lord works through them as they build relationships and serve people who are in need of love and support.

The Pittsburgh Project provides services to local homeowners who are living in poverty. They provided opportunities for young people and adults to live out their faith by using their time and talents to serve others. They are located at 2801 North Charles Street. Go to [www.pittsburghproject.org](http://www.pittsburghproject.org) for more information.

### Inside This Issue:

- a transformational summer mission trip
- an example of a VBS Partnership
- the beginning of an after school out-reach
- a great summer camp model
- ideas for engaging congregations in discipleship and spiritual growth opportunities in your local community, in the nation and the World.

*Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.*  
~ Psalm 1



## Small Group, Big Plans

Mt. Lebanon U.P. Church & Brookline Boulevard U.P. Church  
Ashley Gardner

At Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church, Vacation Bible School is our biggest outreach to children and their families, with over 250 children and 100 volunteers joining us each year. We love to go over-the-top with this event, building our own set and conducting special events such as “travel camp” each afternoon with our third through fifth graders.

This past summer, we felt God calling us to take our Vacation Bible School on the road by leading a second VBS at Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church, a congregation with fewer children, volunteers and resources. We knew from the start that this would be a much smaller event and were expecting around 30 kids to join us for the week. As we opened the doors to the kids on Monday afternoon, we tried to fight off feelings of disappointment and discouragement as our group of 10 children arrived. We quickly found, however, that God had big plans for this small group. The needs of the kids and their backgrounds were completely different than what we had seen at our church. The children came from broken families and situations, each coming with their own set of difficult issues. While it was heartbreaking to hear many of their stories, we were encouraged that we could offer them the hope found in Jesus Christ.

We will continue to share the love of Christ to the children in our community and in Brookline by continuing our partnership with Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church.

## A Blossoming Dream

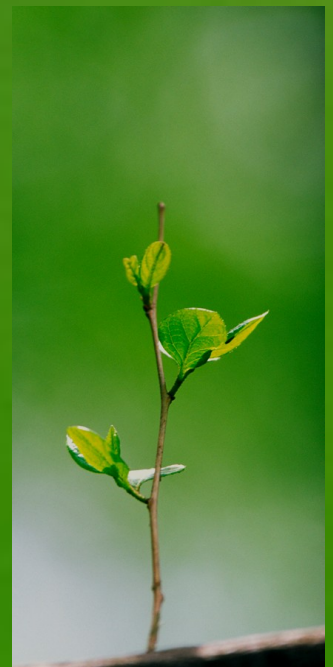
United Presbyterian Church of Universal  
Roger Stuart

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Mason has become an engaging sparkplug for revival at the United Presbyterian Church of Universal (UPCU) in Penn Hills as its youth development director.

In a mere eight weeks in that so-far temporary job, Pastor Pat, armed with huge doses of God’s amazing grace, has nudged our small congregation into place where children and youth find love and a spiritual oasis.

Pastor Pat went out into Universal’s old mill-town streets with two others to invite 27 youngsters to a five-week, thrice weekly Vacation Bible School that culminated August 18 with a day trip to Camp Crestfield. Kids being kids and summer being a mixed lot of opportunities, daily attendance averaged 15 youngsters from among regular, regularly irregular, and just sometimes available participants. But Pastor Pat is the first to tell people it’s not just her but, rather, all of the congregation’s “Presby Partners” – youth as well as adults – working together who have led that hamlet’s church flock in a new-old direction.

It all started with a dream that blossomed into a full-blown vision when a parishioner tithed a bequest she had received by donating \$10,000 to the congregation to stimulate creation of a new youth program. After that came a four-member vision team, proposed by Commissioned Lay Pastor Roger Stuart, that “found” Pat and asked the session to hire her. Now it’s full speed ahead to launch a regular Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday after-school program.



# God's Work Here and There

Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church

Karin Daniels

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people. This memory verse from our 2011 VBS Hometown Nazareth, is reflective of our church family's summer focus: spiritual growth and serving. At Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church (SHUP), Shuppies of all ages did God's work at the church, in the neighborhood, in St. Louis, MO, Asheville, NC and Malawi, Africa.

Our weekly Monday Mission Youth Team sponsored a the team that was participating in the Mt. Lebanon Relay for Life. The youth raised funds for cancer research by going door to door in our neighborhood. At the holiday themed relay event, they helped celebrate Christmas by providing nativity crafts for the children in the community.

Our high school youth travelled to St. Louis, MO where they worked in a crisis nursery school, a homeless outreach, a women's shelter and helped with tornado clean-up. Scriptural preparation before and during the trip focused on choices and the extravagant grace that God provides in response to our mistakes. Upon their return, the youth shared what they had learned from meditating on God's word and how it provided wisdom for their trip. They shared their experiences during a summer worship service.

Recent high school graduate, Sarah Comstock, travelled to Malawi with the Pittsburgh Presbytery's Malawi Partnership. She spent time meeting sisters and brothers in Christ as she travelled to a poor village in Africa. It was life changing for her and she shared her experiences of spiritual growth in a summer sermon.

Many of our adults travelled to Asheville, NC where they served at a veteran's center, food bank and restored a church cemetery. Their scripture preparation focused on the greatest commandment. A second adult group served a family in Pittsburgh through the [Rebuilding Together](#) program. These groups shared their experiences at our Rally Day worship service.

The SHUP Church family gives thanks to God for the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Christ we are given the grace through the Holy Spirit that makes all things possible, and the opportunity to do God's will.

## Summer Camp Success!

Cross Roads Presbyterian Church, Monroeville

Martha Wintersgill

This year, Cross Roads began a new endeavor in Children's Ministries, the *God's Great Earth Summer Science Camp*. We offered five consecutive weeks of full-day camp for children in the community, beginning on July 18 and continuing through August 19. The camp was offered to children ages 6-12 and included a science class in the morning, games, arts & crafts, Bible stories and swimming in the afternoon. The day camp provided discipleship opportunities for 54 individuals with an average of 18 campers each week.

### The Day Camp Program Includes:

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Science program

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm Lunch

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm Active Game Time

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Bible Time with songs, Bible stories & crafts

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm Quiet game time

Tuesday & Thursday active game time was held at Beechwood Park

Friday afternoons were spent at Gateway Heights Swim Club



*"My grandson son said, "we talk about Jesus all day!" What a good thing!"*

*"Thank you to all for the care given to the children each day! Great encouragement from the counselors!"*

*"Your staff were very kind and caring with all the children, they had fun! My child loved ALL his projects!"*