

On the Spiritual Side

jarthur@buckscountyherald.com

Caroline Oakes: Mind and Spirit

The power of moments of awe in our everyday meanderings

There are some moments in our lives when we are literally awestruck.

One morning last week, I saw that a sheet of clear ice had accumulated over the windshield of my car. Nothing unusual, at first, until I looked more closely and saw something I'd never seen before — intricate fern and feather-like ice formations were deeply etched over the entire windshield.

I felt sorry I had to scrape away something so beautiful.

But scrape away I must, I thought, so I opened my car door to reach for my ice scraper. When I glanced up at the windshield, what I saw was breathtaking: With the sun shining through the glass, I could see the ice etchings in stark and glorious relief.

It was as though someone had spent hours painstakingly etching, line by line, a natural masterpiece of ice formations — a subtle background of exquisitely detailed ferns over the entire "canvas," with handfuls of etched, delicate feathers strewn over and across the ferns from one end to the other.

I sat down, closed the car door, and stared, transfixed, at this impossibly beautiful vision of gray and black and white, trying to take in every tiny detail.

I wanted this moment to last



Struck by the beauty of the fern and feather-like formations, Caroline Oakes took this photo of ice on her car windshield.

forever.

Finally, of course, I really did have to leave. I took this photo,

then reluctantly took hold of the ice scraper, got out, and began the strange and unfamiliar

process of scraping off a masterpiece from the windshield of my car.

And so it is with the "impermanence" of these moments of awe that we want to hold onto so tightly.

But Buddhist monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh reassures us that impermanence doesn't mean when something changes, it goes away forever. When something changes, it manifests in a new way, he says, and not only physically.

That makes sense to me. A mathematician friend said the image of the ice etchings reminded him of "the golden ratio" that is intrinsic in the design of nature and applied in architecture, and in musical harmony.

My eyes were opened to new ways of seeing.

So, moments of awe are here and then gone — but gone where? When a moment of awe changes us, teaches us to "see bigger," it becomes a part of us. It becomes what Thich Nhat Hanh calls a "new manifestation."

"Nothing dies," he says, "It only changes form."

Caroline Oakes, a Bucks County resident, has a master's degree in Practical Theology and leads spiritual practice seminars and workshops in the Philadelphia region. oakes.caroline@gmail.com

Simple Gifts entertains at Salem UCC

The music of the State College-based group Simple Gifts filled the sanctuary of Salem United Church of Christ in Doylestown on Jan. 21.

More than 70 people gathered for the concert sponsored by the Prime Timers of Salem Church.

Using a variety of stringed instruments, Simple Gifts played Appalachian, Eastern European, Middle Eastern and other folk music. It was a friendly and warm concert performed by two women who love folk music.

The day before the concert, on Jan. 20, the duo of Linda Littleton and Karen Hirshon met with the George School Choir of approximately 20 teenagers.

Littleton and Hirshon presented a program on different musical instruments and discussed taking music along into adulthood.

They provided instruction on playing ukuleles, they discussed arranging music and they met



Linda Littleton and Karen Hirshon of Simple Gifts stand in front of the Bible in Tile at Salem United Church of Christ in Doylestown.

informally with the youths at meal time.

In addition, the musicians met with more than 15 preschool children. At 4 p.m., they performed a concert for more than 100 senior

citizens at Pennswood Village in Newtown.

The concert was funded by Salem's Prime Timers, the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts, and PECO.

Pleasant Ridge Church names new pastor



Kyle Delhagen is the new pastor at Pleasant Ridge Church in Danboro. The congregation enjoys his singing and guitar playing.

Pleasant Ridge Church in Danboro has named Kyle Delhagen as its pastor as of the first of the year.

Delhagen filled in when the church's former pastor left in April, and the congregation looks forward to his sermons continuing through the year.

Church members and friends find him always willing and available for pastoral visits and conversation. They also are pleased that he can sing and play the guitar.

The congregation is part of the Reformed Church in America. Worship is held at 10 a.m. every Sunday, and the doors are always open to visitors — those who may have grown up in the faith, and those who are exploring what it means for the first time.



Speaking about students

Dawn Parker, principal at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Doylestown, speaks at The Ladies of Mt. Carmel, at the group's annual covered dish event Jan. 14, in St. Mary's Hall. Parker, who is in her fifth month as principal, came to OLMC after 15 years teaching at St. Andrew School in Newtown. She shared a Power Point presentation, highlighting many of the student's activities, including science, math, technological, music and service projects. Parker also spoke about the new pre-kindergarten and after-school CARES Programs.

HAPPENINGS

St. Philip's celebrates Candlemas

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, 10 Chapel Road, New Hope, celebrates the Feast of the Presentation, or Candlemas, at both Masses at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 1.

It commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the Temple 40 days after Christmas. On this day, the candles for the year are blessed. St. Blaise will also be remembered with the blessing of throats.

For information, visit stphilipsnewhope.org.

St. Martin's hosts luncheon, blood drive

The St. Martin of Tours Parish Café serves a free hearty

lunch for community friends and neighbors at St. Martin's Parish Life Center, 1 Riverstone Circle, New Hope, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31.

Join in for fellowship and a great meal, sponsored by The Men of St. Martin's. All are welcome.

A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held in the same location from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., in conjunction with the luncheon.

Peace and Justice Ministry welcomes local attorney

Robert Mancini, an attorney and parishioner at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Doylestown, will speak on Monday, Feb. 2, about the American justice sys-

tem from both the prosecutorial and the defense points of view.

He has served as a deputy district attorney for Bucks County and is currently a criminal defense lawyer.

Mancini will address a number of subjects and how they play out on either side of the legal structure, among them the juvenile justice system and the death penalty. He will also speak to the thorny issue of how one reconciles certain legal work with one's faith.

The presentation will begin at 7 p.m. in St. Mary's Hall, 209 E. State St., at the corner of Maple Avenue, Doylestown.

The event is sponsored by the Peace and Justice Ministry; refreshments will be served. For information, contact Fran Loricé at 215-489-4039.

Worship Directory

SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, February 1, 2015
Guest Preacher — The Rev. Judy Dwyer

9:30 am Worship / Communion / Sunday School
10:30 am Fellowship and Refreshments
Nursery Service available

186 E. Court St., Doylestown • www.DoylestownSalemUCC.org
215.348.9860

GOD'S LOVE EXPERIENCED AND EXPRESSED

**To advertise here,
 contact your advertising representative
 at 215-794-1096**
