

## This 'n' That by Arlene Yothers

The Souderton Homes is slowly opening their doors. Relatives can see their loved ones in skilled and personal care. Apple Orchard Cafe and Corner Store are not open to the public yet, but they are hopeful that it will happen soon.

The Heritage Center does have a small gift shop if you are looking for a unique gift idea. The Heritage Center will have the Whack & Roll Croquet tournament again on June 4 & 5. These days are for the young and young at heart. Bring your lawn chair and watch the event unfold, there is no charge to be a spectator. Go to [info@mhep.org](mailto:info@mhep.org) for more information. The Heritage Center will be holding a used book sale in July as a fund raiser. Do you have books that you can donate? If so, see me.

The Care and Share Shoppes just celebrated "Volunteer Week" in April. They really do appreciate those who come and help there. If you can share some of your time with them, it's for a good cause. If you are looking to shop, they have the stores ready for you to come.

The Worm Project did not go on hold because of the pandemic. Children around the world are in need of your funding this organization. The pills are being distributed by way of organizations that have workers in the countries that need them most. Children need the deworming pills to keep them healthy and allow them to use the nourishment to grow. Please put your donation in the jar in the foyer or pick up an envelope and mail it direct.

## Community Gathering with Fellowship Meal

A fellowship meal is being planned for Sunday, May 23 after the baptism and covenant renewal service. Pray for good weather as we gather for a wonderful day of community.

The Fellowship Committee is asking for your help for the pot luck meal. Please bring a carry-in main dish and salad or dessert. Come enjoy a long awaited time of Swamp fellowship!



## Swamp Teen Spotlight - Lydia Longacre



Hi! I'm Lydia Longacre and my parents are Bill and Katie Longacre. I've been attending Swamp Mennonite Church my whole life so it feels like home. Youth group has become a family to me. I love music and messing around on my guitar because it helps me connect to God. I'm a junior at Dock where I play field hockey and participate in band and touring choir.

I enjoy watching Disney movies and reading books. One of my favorites is *Harry Potter*. Someday I want to go skydiving, even though I don't like heights.

Currently, I'm working in dining services at Dock Woods. I enjoy forming relationships with and hearing stories from the residents. This summer I will be a counselor at Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp. I'm looking forward to impacting the lives of campers.

## GROWTH MATTERS

SWAMP MENNONITE CHURCH

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## Pastor Nathan

### A Transition within a Transition within a Transition

We recently purchased new computers for the office. Those of you who use the public account on the office computer for church responsibilities had probably noticed that it was becoming slower and slower, taking longer to turn on and do simple functions. My laptop was also running into trouble, one Sunday I preached from it because I could not get it to print, and there were other problems along the way. I am extremely thankful for the new computers that turn on in 3 minutes and open Microsoft Word without sitting and waiting ... and waiting ... and waiting.

But the reality of getting a new computer, when you use it regularly for a range of tasks, is that it takes work to get everything set up. Between creating a list of all of the programs that need to be migrated, finding product keys and login information, doing the actual file transfers, cleaning everything off the old computer, etc, etc, etc... I have spent at least 6 hours, if not 10, in the past month working to get both mine and Carl's computers up and running. The future will be better because of the work that was put in, but the reality of change and transition is that it takes extra energy and time to reap the reward of the transition in the future.

We are in multiple transitions as a congregation. We are currently transitioning away from our COVID Guidelines, something that we all have been looking forward to for over a year.

This is a transition that comes with strong feelings for many people. Some feel that we should have made certain changes months ago, others feel we should wait many more months before making changes. But besides the thoughts and feelings related to COVID, there is the reality that making this transition will take extra time and energy.

Many people talk about "getting back to normal", but this raises the question of "what is normal?" We are constantly growing and changing as a congregation. Who we were in 2019 was not the same as who we were in 2015 or 2010. If our goal as we transition away from our COVID Guidelines is to get back to who we were in 2019, we are actually going the wrong direction. The better question is, "Who is God calling us to be in 2022 and beyond?" Rather than talking about "getting back to normal" I've tried to talk about "the future after COVID".

In what ways have you grown or changed over the past year? In what ways has COVID impacted you or your family, how you relate to one another, and how you relate to God and the church? What are you looking forward to as we move towards life after COVID?

We are also in the midst of another transition. As Pastor Tami moves out of her position in order to pursue chaplaincy we are readjusting pastoral responsibilities and the structure of our pastoral team. A pastoral search process alone takes extra time and energy before we reach stability, but a change of this level takes even

more time and energy. We believe that God is leading us somewhere good and that the future after this pastoral transition will continue to lead us as a congregation to be the people that God wants us to be, but in the meantime there may be times when things are unclear or there is uncertainty.

So where does this extra time and energy come from to put the work into these transitions and get to the future that God is calling us towards? In order to transition well, there may be things that we need to put on hold as we put our energy into things that will pay a long-term dividend. We may need to accept a short-term dip in quality in certain areas, trusting that the long-term benefits of embracing change will be worth it. We will definitely need to rely on the strength and grace of God to carry us, continue to give us hope and a vision, and lead us towards the good things He has prepared.

In the words of Isaiah:

*Even youths grow  
tired and weary,  
and young men  
stumble and fall;  
but those who  
hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar  
on wings like eagles;  
they will run  
and not grow weary,  
they will walk  
and not be faint.*



## Church Board Highlights

Nathan reviewed the results of the recent COVID Survey conducted by the board. He noted that conflict can make it harder for us to think rationally and referenced 1 Corinthians 13 about listening and trusting others' motives. Nathan offered to compile and distribute a copy of the results to all board members. Pastor Nathan presented a plan consisting of 4 phases of removing COVID Guidelines. It was decided to communicate this information to the congregation placing an insert in the bulletin, make a one-call announcement and send an e-mail. It was suggested to review our current practices for receiving offering in light of the large percentage of online giving. Meanwhile, it was decided to resume having a prayer for the

offering. The foyer is reserved for those who wish to keep their mask on and not be in the sanctuary where others remove their mask. Masks may also be worn when seated in the sanctuary, if so desired. Face coverings extending below the mouth and above the nose are required when entering and moving around inside the building. Once seated, face coverings may be removed. When someone is presenting to a group from a distance of more than 20' they may remove their face covering while they are speaking.

Amy advised the Search Committee placed an advertisement on a website. After review, they have decided to conduct Zoom interviews with 2 potential candidates on April 8. Nathan noted there are 4 different

individuals under consideration to hire as subcontractors to plan worship services after Tami leaves the position.

In other business, the Board approved the following: Dan Cooper to fill the position of Minister of Worship being vacated by Pastor Tami Good. Laura Rush agreed to serve as a non-clergy delegate for the Mosaic Conference with the Church Board's approval. Quincy recommended an extra \$900.00 for supply pastors above the 2021 budgeted cost for the remainder of this year.



## Ministry Team Highlights

There was discussion on the positive outcomes from the parent/youth meeting as well as good feedback from the Prophet Series. There are some difficulties in finding people to step into open positions, specifically Kitchen Committee and Minister of Worship, due to the uncertainty around COVID.

This summer will be a Summer of Service where members are encouraged to find a need and then form a small group of people to coordinate with each other to meet that need. There were ideas of integrating stories of service into the worship service, placing pictures of service on a board in the foyer, and keeping track of volunteers and time spent on their project. Discussed the best way to measure, what categories service might fall into, and whether online

or paper was the best format for collecting information. Nathan will revise the proposal based upon suggestions offered and asked how each ministry area can work with this. It was decided to recommend to the Church Board to replace the weekly financial and attendance figures with service project statistics in the bulletin over the summer. The project would be officially announced during the Easter Service on Sunday, April 4.

In light of recent insurance questions, it was decided that drivers for church events need to be 21 years of age or older. Also, a form should be signed by each driver to serve as a representative of Swamp Mennonite Church.

Nathan reviewed the current Membership Process put in place in 2010. He proposed a number of

revisions and timeline updates which the ministers agreed with.

Nathan reminded ministers about upcoming events. The Denlingers' "visit" Sunday, March 28 (originally scheduled for 2020). Pentecost is May 23, which is the "Birthday of the Church". It was decided to have a time of celebration before worship. Kathy will check with the Fellowship Committee about participating in the morning events. On May 30, a time of sharing is planned about what has sustained you spiritually over the past year.

The new hymnals have arrived and it was recommended to replace the red hymnals with the new one beginning on April 4. It was decided to give the red hymnal as a keepsake to those who would like to take one home, and place some in the library.

## Child Abuse Clearances

We are continuing to work toward state and federal compliance for child care volunteers here at Swamp. With a variety of children services, we are asking everyone to do child abuse clearances, especially since the nursery caregivers are recruited from teenagers and adult members. Anyone 18 and older are being asked to file for clearances. It does not cost anything to do the clearances, except time. A copy of

the child clearances need to be on file at church. Some of you may already have clearances from your employment or volunteer work. We are asking you provide the church office with a copy. They need to be within <5 years. (Clearances must be done every 5 years). The following are needed: 1) PA Child Abuse Clearance, 2) PA Criminal Background Check, 3) FBI Clearance, only if not lived in Pa for past 10 years. See Laura

or Kathy to sign form if you have lived in Pa for past 10 years.

Please visit the following sites to complete your registration  
1.) <https://epatch.state.pa.us>.  
2.) <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>.

Any questions or assistance needed in filing can be addressed to Laura Rush or Kathy Rosenberger. Thank you for your immediate cooperation in this matter.

## Summer Youth Events: May - July

Sunday, May 16  
Picnic and Frisbee Golf 11:45 am-4:00 pm  
Leaving right after church and dropping off at church  
We will provide Lunch

Friday-Saturday June 11-12  
Pool Party into Lock-in 6:00 pm-7:00 am  
Pool party at Ken and Cindy Longacre's followed by the Lock-in at Swamp

Wednesday, June 16  
Youth group going to Freddy Hill 6:00 pm-9:00 pm

Friday-Sunday June 25-27  
Junior Youth Retreat

Sunday-Saturday July 4-10  
Senior High Missions Trip

Wednesday, July 14  
Movie Night at church (Most likely outdoors)

Wednesday, July 28  
Water Games

For more info, contact a youth sponsor.

## Voices Together

(New Mennonite Hymnal)

*Is now available for purchase*

**Hard Covered Pew Hymnal: \$24.00**

**Audio Recording of Music:**

**Individual CD ~ \$18.00**

**4-Volume Set ~ \$60.00**

Please visit [mennomedia.org](http://mennomedia.org)  
under "music" tab to see items.

*A sign-up sheet is posted  
on the bulletin board by the Nursery.*

