

## Communicating with the Congregation

It is important that all ministries in our congregation are able to communicate through our bulletin, newsletter, one call, and worship services. However, sometimes there is confusion about the appropriate methods for using these tools. The following principles guide communication with our church family.

The bulletin, One Call system, and Celebrating Our Lives Together in our worship are for the purpose of communicating the ministry of Swamp Mennonite Church. They are not for personal use or promoting a personal ministry. However, this newsletter is an appropriate place for personal notes to the congregation and advertising or reporting personal ministry.

All bulletin announcements requests must be approved by a member of Ministry Team (or from a committee that reports to Ministry Team) and must be submitted to the secretary by noon on the Wednesday before the following Sunday's Bulletin. The praises and prayer section is overseen by the Congregational Care Team and may contain personal thank-you's when appropriate.

All announcements that use the One Call System must be approved by a member of Ministry Team and confirmed with the secretary or Lead Pastor for scheduling purposes. All prayer requests are approved by the Prayer Coordinator, secretary, or pastoral staff.

For any announcement requests to be made during the Celebrating Our Lives Together portion of our Sunday Worship Service, any verbal announcements are approved by a member of Ministry Team as well as the Minister of Music and Worship. Please try to confirm any verbal announcements with the Minister of Music and Worship by Friday. Except for unusual circumstances, the worship leader makes all verbal announcements.

Finally, for any items that appear in the Growth Matters Newsletter, articles are submitted to the secretary by the posted deadline in the bulletin and/or monthly calendar. The Lead Pastor has the authority to refuse to publish any submitted article.

## Summer of Service

What needs are you aware of? Perhaps you have a neighbor with health issues who isn't able to care for their property. Or maybe you pass someone everyday who is walking to work because they can't afford a car. Perhaps someone at work has kids at home who are part of the free lunch program at school and go without a meal during summer break.

These are all needs that are right around us, but many times we don't see them because we are too busy with our own lives that we don't notice or too insecure in ourselves that we don't ask.

In Acts 3 we read that Peter and John were going towards the temple at the time of prayer. They were on their way to church! As they go they pass a man who they probably often passed. They didn't know this man, everyone else who passed probably saw him

as a condition – lame – they saw him as hopeless. They didn't see him as a person to be known and cared for they saw him as a problem to be managed. A penny here, a penny there, and maybe their conscience would feel better. But because of the power of Jesus over sin and death, because he offered new life to Peter and John through the power of the Holy Spirit, as they passed this man they no longer saw a problem, they saw a person. They saw a child of God. And so they stopped. They listened. They looked. They cared.

“Here's the deal, we don't have any money, but it looks like money isn't going to help much anyways. In the name of Jesus, stand up and walk.”

As you go through your day and see people in need, do you see a problem to be fixed or do you

see a person to be loved?

As you gather others to help meet needs through this Summer of Service, may we Connect for a Purpose, not just connecting with each other to “solve problems” or “meet needs” but also connecting with our unchurched friends and neighbors in order to love them, getting to know them, showing them love.



## Pastor Nathan

Over the past 6 months we have been blessed with the preaching of Mark Wenger, Mike Spinelli, KrisAnne Swartley, Karl McKinney, and Garry Denlinger. I hope that you have appreciated their careful study of Scripture and words of wisdom. Hearing many voices reminds us that The Church is large. Hearing various stories of ministry reminds us that following Jesus happens more than just from 10:15-11:30 on a Sunday morning at 2125 Rosedale Road.

In the midst of a busy season of ministry, helping our ministries transition out of COVID protocols and engaging in the search process for our next Associate Pastor, I have been especially blessed and grateful for the opportunity to focus my energies on some of these and other pastoral tasks. I am thankful to our Church Board for their careful listening through the review process last year and their willingness to free me up in my responsibilities. Since some of you have asked, it might be helpful to clarify that I am still working full-time hours. The transition to 3/4 time is based on the results of our search process.

With a guest speaker scheduled the last Sunday in June, I had the privilege of joining our Jr. Youth on retreat as their speaker for four sessions. We worshipped and meditated on Scripture together. Reflecting on Joshua 24:15 "choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" we considered that our choices matter, who we are with impacts our

choices, God loves us so much that he has chosen us, and responding to God in faith means choosing to participate in his mission. Even though we were away from the church building that Sunday, we met with God.

In the coming months we will have a different opportunity to see that The Church is larger than our congregation and that ministry happens in more places than our sanctuary. I have connected with Mike Ford from Blooming Glen Mennonite and Rose Bender from Whitehall Mennonite and we have planned a three week sermon series together called "Healing What's Broken". Each of us will preach one sermon in the series. We will be doing it first at Blooming Glen in July, then at Whitehall near the end of August, and finally here at Swamp in October. When I preach my sermon in this series at Blooming Glen on July 11, Mike Ford will come and fill the pulpit at Swamp with a similar exchange happening with Rose in August and then I will switch with them when they preach here in October. None of us will receive any additional compensation beyond our normal church salaries. This is a way to share resources across our congregations, building relationships with other pastors and congregations in our conference, and learning from Scripture together as a broader church. I believe that this is a pattern for ministry consistent with Scripture and our Anabaptist tradition and am excited to see where it leads us in the future. We will be engaging

in a similar combined series on the books of 2 & 3 John with Finland and Perkiomenville Mennonite Churches in November, February, and May.

As we continue to Connect for a Purpose within our own congregation, our community, conference, and beyond, may God meet you where you are, may God reveal to you his will for your life, and may you experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit within the community of The Church equipping you to be ministers of the gospel 24/7 wherever you find yourself.



**The Werner Family Band**  
Gospel bluegrass music concert  
Butter Valley Mennonite Church  
Sunday, July 11  
7:00 pm, rain or shine.

**Swamp Mennonite Church**  
2125 Rosedale Road  
Quakertown, PA  
18951-4013  
Email: [info@justswamp.com](mailto:info@justswamp.com)  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
Phone: (215) 536-7928

## Ministry Team Highlights

What has been good or encouraging in your life, our congregation, or your ministry? Things to be thankful for include parents and the heritage they have passed on, for God's healing and bountiful provisions, the laughter of a child and being able to enjoy the moment, and seeing more members returning to Sunday Worship.

There was much discussion on different ways to encourage individuals to take part in the Summer of Service project. These included the use of 2 separate boards – one for posting requests for projects and another for those signing up to take up project(s). Reminding congregational members during the announcement time in the service. Having a skit on June 6<sup>th</sup> to clarify and commence this summer service project. Lowell will ask youth sponsors if they're willing to organize a skit, if so Shannon will

communicate with the youth group. There was added discussion on how to keep focused with the use of summer decorations, have worship leader highlight different items listed on the service board, continue through the outdoor service in mid-September, incorporate sharing experience time into the service.

Garry and Ruth Denlinger will be visiting the weekend of June 25-27. Pastor Nathan and Dana offered the use of their home as they will be away with the Jr. Youth Retreat. An announcement will be made on Sunday about the upcoming Denlinger Visit and to look for individuals to host meals (2 dinners and 1 lunch).

Cindy Longacre and Katie Gehman are planning a celebration to honor Cassidy's treatments and recovery from her Cancer. There was the additional idea of an altar of remembrance and praise. It was

suggested to contact Russ Haas about ideas for some type of monument.

In other business, Johanna received information about a family that will be traveling to France to help with refugees. Decided not to pursue Micah Ruch with CRU at West Chester University. Lowell will commence planning some type of event for those who are graduating. Minister's will follow up with those who do not return a Covenant sheet. Pastor Nathan is continuing to prepare for the one-on-one annual Minister Review process.



## Pink Prayer Box

A pink gift wrapped box is located on the glass table to receive your prayer requests. If you or someone else would like to be prayed for, please leave a note in the box.



## This 'n' that by Arlene Yothers

The Living Branches (Souderton Mennonite Home) is slowly opening up to the public. There will be an Online Auction for the Agape Fund, August 20-28. The LeFevre Quartet will be featured at the Gospel Music Fest on August 28 at 6 pm and the Annual Hymn Sing Under the Tent will be held on Sunday, August 29 at 6 pm.

The Mennonite Heritage Center will be holding a Used Book Sale July 22-29. If you have books to donate, please see Arlene. They will accept books in good condition until July 16, no magazines or textbooks.

The Worm Project partners with other organizations such as the Healthy Ninos Honduras to provide deworming pills for many children. Recently, the Worm Project donated 500,000 tablets of Albendazole to the Honduras MAMA Project. Thank you for your donations.

Shoppers and volunteers and your unwanted items are all welcome at the Care and Share Shoppes. Please help in any way that you can. This organization partners with Mennonite Central Committee. People are helped in countries all around the world.

## Teen Spotlight: Ben Longacre



My name is Ben Longacre. I am the youngest of 4 siblings and have 9 cousins. Some of my favorite hobbies include playing soccer, listening to music, and scrolling through social media on my phone. Although I don't particularly dislike many types of music, my favorite genre to listen

to is Country. Some of my favorite foods are cheeseburgers, pizza, pasta, and pretty much all fast food.

I am currently entering my senior year of high school at Dock Mennonite Academy, and can't wait to be done with school. My favorite classes include lunch, study hall, and gym. One part of school I particularly enjoy is playing spikeball outside with my friends during lunch.

After high school I am enlisting into the United States Marine Corps. I have already taken my oath of enlistment and completed all of the entry processing requirements aside from having my high school diploma. In the Marine Corps I would like to have a job in the field of

reconnaissance. Marine Recon squads on deployment are mainly tasked with being scouts and training foreign ally militaries.

I have attended Swamp for all of my life for both church and youth group, and that has definitely played a big part in making me the person that I am today. A favorite Bible verse of mine is Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." I like it because it is a reminder that God will never abandon me, so no matter how bad things look or a situation seems I can always know that God is on my side every step of the way.

## Church Board Highlights

The board reviewed the current COVID Guidelines. It was decided to move to Phase 2 on Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup> and Phases 3 and 4 on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. We would obtain N95 masks for those not comfortable with removal of mask guidelines.

It was decided to continue receiving the offering in the foyer, with the addition of bringing the plate to the front near the beginning of the service to pray for it. This was not a COVID related decision. The following suggestions were offered to further discuss how we will receive the offering in the future: ask members for their opinion and/or survey, offer a special Sunday School class in September, present a more permanent option on how to process offering time at the annual meeting in December.

For the Summer of Service

project, it was suggested that Board Members and their families do something together. An option presented was a meal for RIPPLE. Amy will obtain more information and send an email to all board members.

Amy advised that the current candidate being reviewed by the Search Committee had some life circumstances which slowed down the process.

Pastor Nathan was looking for clarification on the Sabbatical Policy, when it officially starts and when the eligibility commences. It was suggested to speak with Conference Minister Mike Clemmer and contact other churches about their policy. Bob and Quincy will speak further with Pastor Nathan.

## Swamp Youth Events July-August

Sunday-Saturday July 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>  
Senior High Missions Trip

Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>  
Movie Night at church  
Time TBA

Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>  
Water games  
Time TBA

Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>  
Community Slip-n-Slide Kickball  
Time TBA

Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>  
Pool Party  
6:30 pm-8:15 pm

Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>  
2021-22 Youth Group  
Official Start Date

