

This 'n' That by Arlene Yothers

Would you like to try something different? Care & Share Shoppes will be giving you the opportunity to help process merchandise in their workrooms. If you are interested, go to the Welcome Center on Wednesday, November 17 and/or Wednesday, December 29 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. If you have questions about this NEW opportunity, see Arlene Yothers or email Suzanne Kratz at skratz@careandshareshoppes.org. The shopping hours are Monday to Thursday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Friday from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. If you want to donate items, the Donation Tent & Furniture Donation hours are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Remember, if you shop on your birthday and bring proof, you get 50% discount!

The Heritage Center had a great turn out for the Apple Butter Frolic! Thanks to all of you who helped or came out for the event.

The Heritage Center has a nice shop to buy unique gifts for your unique friends and family members any time of the year.

Are you hungry for Apple Orchard Cafe food? I was told that if you eat with a resident of the Souderton Homes, you are welcome to eat there. The Corner Store gift shop at the Souderton Homes is open to the public and you can find nice gifts in there too.

If you are in the giving spirit, please remember the Worm Project. The informational banquet that was scheduled for November 6 has been canceled. The need is still there, for only pennies a pill, a child can be free of parasites for 6 months. There are missionaries who are able to deliver these pills to under-privileged countries, funds are needed for the deworming pills. Please consider helping. There are envelopes on the table in the foyer for your donation.



2022 Directory

November is Directory Update Month. Please look for a sheet to update your mailing and contact information for the new year.

Be sure to make all changes on this form and return it to the office by Tuesday, November 30.

The new Church Directory for 2022 will be printed in mid-December and a copy will be placed in each of the church mailboxes.



2021 Swamp Youth Fall/Winter Events

Regular Wednesday Night Youth Gatherings 6:30-8:15 pm
November 3, 10 & 17
December 1, 8, 15 & 22

Saturday, November 13
Youth Fundraiser Meal @ Swamp
6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Wednesday, December 29
Christmas Party @ location TBD
6:30-8:30 pm

Friday-Sunday, February 18-20, 2022
Winter Youth Retreat @ Camp Men-o-lan

For more information
please contact a youth sponsor



Advent Events

An insert containing 2021 Advent Events will be available in a bulletin later this month.



GROWTH MATTERS

SWAMP MENNONITE CHURCH

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Planning for the Future

Over the past year, our search committee has interviewed five applicants and seriously considered three of them as potential candidates. We started our search process at Leadership Retreat last year where Church Board and Ministry Team considered what our strengths and weaknesses are as a congregation, what things around us in our community and culture make it easier or harder to carry out our mission, and what our growing edges are – things that if we spent just a little more time and energy on we would see exponential results.

In light of that discussion, Church Board made certain recommendations to search committee of what they should be planning and looking for in an Associate Pastor. As we have taken those plans for a position and talked with real people who are applying, it has refined our understanding of who we are as a congregation, what we need in an Associate Pastor, and who might fill a role like that.

With our move away from hiring a task specific Associate, such as an Associate Pastor of Youth or Worship, we are looking for someone with more general administrative and leadership abilities that can help to support the ministry of the congregation, with shifting task responsibilities depending on what is needed at the time. The Associate Pastor will work closely with Ministry Team to develop the ministries we currently have and new ministries.

We hope this new position will continue to develop leaders within our congregation who are passionate about following Jesus in their own life and passionate about discipling others within our congregation and community. We are planning to shape the specific responsibilities and tasks of the Associate Pastor around their gifting and experiences as well as the needs of our congregation, fitting all that together with the gifts and passion that I bring.

Moving forward the plan is for my role as Lead Pastor to focus on casting vision along with Church Board, overseeing preaching and teaching within the congregation as the main Sunday morning preacher, overseeing congregational care by leading our Congregational Care Team, communicating vision and creating strategy with the Associate Pastor and Ministry Team, and overseeing the planning of Sunday morning worship, offering support to the music ministry of the church. The Associate Pastor will work closely with Carl and I to provide administrative support, develop leaders primarily through our Ministry Team, oversee discipleship of all members across ages through relationship and as needed teaching, and complete tasks to support specific ministries as needed.

We hope that this gives us flexibility in the future, helping us find an Associate Pastor who can engage for a longer time period, bringing consistency, stability, and leadership as we move into the future that God is preparing for us.

The Annual
Member
Meeting
is Tuesday,
December 7
at 7:00 PM.

More details
to follow

Giving
Thanks

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Church Board Highlights

The focus for this year's Leadership Retreat is what it means to "take the faith into our everyday lives" and how do we define "discipleship" here at Swamp and what are we doing to "make disciples" of all ages.

The board revisited the sabbatical policy. The current document notes that the Lead Pastor begins to accumulate time beginning in the 3rd year of service. Then becomes eligible to take one after 7 years of service. Revisions were discussed such as expanding the policy to include ordained associate pastors with a minimum of ½ time employment for eligibility. Nathan was asked to rework the current wording of the policy for further board discussion at the November meeting.

Recognizing Pastor Nathan's service prior to becoming Lead Pastor, it was decided to offer a variance to the requirement that a pastor serve 2 years before accumulating sabbatical time.

Given that Pastor Nathan has served as Lead Pastor for 5 years (2017-2021) he has accumulated 10 weeks sabbatical time and is eligible to take that sabbatical upon submitting a plan that is approved by Church Board and Ministry Team in accordance with the Sabbatical Policy.

The Search Committee is preparing for a 2nd interview with a candidate. It was decided to invite board members to a 3rd interview, based on the outcome and consensus of the committee and not to replace Mary Longacre on the Search Committee, as she

recently resigned.

In other business, further discussion was had on the role of Finance Chair on the board, in light of the small pool of people to fill that role. It was suggested that whoever serves as Finance Chair should not need to be present at all Church Board meetings as a voting member, but to be available upon request. It was proposed to consider having an affirmation vote at the annual member meeting for board committees. In addition, it was decided to have a document outlining budget preparation as part of the board policy. The process of preparing the budget for 2022 has begun. Pastor Nathan distributed copies of his proposed new weekly schedule. Upon review, board members were receptive to his plans.

Ministry Team Highlights

The meeting was opened with prayer.

What has been good or encouraging in your life, our congregation, or your ministry?

Dan – Worship scheduling was easier the second time, putting new hymnal slides on flash drive.

Rachel – Clubs have resumed with a lot of support, combined Sunday School classes.

Shannon – Small group planning moving forward with future creation of a survey, possibility of having someone to do meals for clubs beginning in January.

What has been challenging or difficult in your life, our congregation, or your ministry?

Dan – Planning of Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve services.

Rachel – Finding enough teachers for youth Sunday School.

Pastor Nathan spoke of Leadership Retreat history from previous years. How do we do community? How do we define disciple/discipleship? Current pastoral candidate will be coming for lunch and give a devotional.

Pastor Nathan reminded all ministers to begin thinking about preparing their report for Congregational Meeting coming up in December. Carl will send out copies of the last 2 years as a reference. The reports are to be submitted to the office by November 19.

We are awaiting a response on how to proceed with the Worm Project Presentation in Worship. Pastor Nathan offered the closing prayer.



From Pastor Nathan...

In a sermon over the summer, I talked about the economic realities of the modern wedding industry and how that relates to our beliefs regarding marriage and membership. I hoped to call our attention to real needs within our church family, what it means to live in nonconformity to the systems of this world, and moderation in how we spend our money so we have extra to share with those in need. However, these truths should not diminish our view of marriage.

Marriage is an extremely important and biblical concept. In a wedding ceremony, two individuals make vows to each other in the presence of God and their community of faith. In our culture, weddings are often seen as events for family and friends, but as Christians, a wedding is primarily a worship service. A marriage is a supernatural picture of our relationship with God. Paul in Ephesians 5:23-31, in talking about how spouses ought to treat one another, continually moves back and forth between talking about marriage and Christ's relationship with the church until he finally seems to say that you can't even separate these things.

Jesus affirms marriage as holy, set apart, and created by God when he is asked about divorce and responds by quoting Genesis 2 and adding, "What God has joined together, let no one separate." According to Jesus, the act of marriage creates an unbreakable bond, formed by God himself. But, when we engage in sex outside of marriage, we still create this bond, but it is outside the blessing of God and the church. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?

Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." So it is important as Christians that we wait to engage in sex until we have made vows of commitment to our spouse.

As we say in our Confession of Faith, "We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life. Christian marriage is a mutual relationship in Christ, a covenant made in the context of the church. According to Scripture, right sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship."

So, not having enough money should not keep someone from getting married. A Christian marriage ought to be taken seriously, but these vows can be made before God and the church in 15 minutes on a Sunday morning (with appropriate counsel and relational preparation taken ahead of time) without any money being spent, just as we do for ordination services, baptisms, or baby dedications. Then, if the couple wants to have a larger celebration with family and friends, they can save up and have a wedding and reception at some point in the future when finances allow.

Jesus in Matthew 23 says that the Pharisees had become so specific about tithing that they had neglected the more important matters of the law. He said without neglecting tithing, they should focus on matters of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. The same is true for us, without neglecting marriage, may we focus on justice, mercy, and faithfulness within our

community. This impacts our practices around sexuality and marriage, and it also impacts decisions around how we spend our money so that those who have extra keep enough to share with those in need.

May we take marriage, money, and membership seriously, but may we not use any of these to shame a brother or sister who is earnestly trying to follow Jesus in the messiness of real life. May we speak truth to one another in love, being willing to hear each person's story and struggles without judgment. May we receive correction with grace, being willing to hear the concerns of others without defensiveness.

"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Ephesians 4:14-16

