

## Through All This by Pastor Nathan Good

Two years ago, Pastor Tami let us know she was feeling called towards other work. This became an opportunity to review our current staffing needs. We wanted to look towards the future, rather than what we needed in the past.

In the past we hired associate pastors for ministry areas, like youth or worship. We were not sure either of those fully fit what we needed. There is also a lack of people looking for those roles, especially at half-time. First, we weighed our own strengths, weaknesses, and growing edges. Then we decided to pursue an Associate Pastor who could support all of our ministries. We were looking for someone who could develop leaders and equip everyone to serve, rather than having one ministry focus area.

Moving this way was a step of faith. It was a new direction for our church and we weren't sure what the position would turn into. I am still impressed and grateful for our leaders on Church Board and the Search Team. They stepped into something unclear and prayerfully considered where God might be taking us.

Little did we know that Pastor Tracy was sensing his own shifting call within ministry! Looking back, we can see that God was at work in us and in Tracy to bring us where we are today. It is amazing what can happen when we step out in faith.

It has been 9 months since Tracy started. My focus as Lead Pastor is working with Church Board to ask who God wants us to be. My main tasks are preaching, pastoral care, providing direction, and planning our worship services. Tracy's focus is working with Ministry Team to ask how we will get where we are going. His main

tasks are overseeing day to day ministry operation, serving in ministries where needed, providing administrative support, and cultivating discipleship relationships.

We hired Tracy to support and equip people for all ministry areas rather than focusing on one area. We do have a current need in our youth ministry, so Tracy is putting more time and energy there at this time. The idea is that, as he raises up leaders and strengthens that ministry, at some point he will not be needed. Then he can focus more time and energy in other areas. Tracy also helped start our Covenant Communities with Shannon Longacre. He reviewed the Child Protection Policy with Rachel (Seidel) Whary. And he has done a lot of leg work planning our trip to Israel.

Pastor Tracy is fully responsible for the day-to-day administration of the ministry of the church. He is the primary editor for the bulletin and newsletter. If you are a

ministry leader, I can almost guarantee you that in the past 9 months if you have come to me with a question, I have sent you to Pastor Tracy instead.

In order for us to hire a full-time Associate Pastor, I moved to 75% time. My hours decreased from 45-50 hours per week to 34-38 hours. This was made possible by shifting full responsibility for the ministries of the church to Pastor Tracy, as well as decreasing my sermons from 45-50 weeks per year to 30-35. I completed the transition to 75% time in March of 2022. My extra time is spent coaching individuals and organizations through transition and teaching 6th grade Bible at Faith Christian Academy.

Thank you all for your patience through this season of transition. Change is not easy, but when we discern the movement of the Holy Spirit and courageously follow, God leads us in amazing ways. May He continue to guide and direct our paths.

## This 'n' That by Arlene Yothers

Lots of events happening in the near future before we get caught up in the holiday rush. We will start with a big event at the Heritage Center. It's the Apple Butter Frolic on October 1. This is a fundraiser of the Heritage Center. There is a need for volunteers and visitors. If you can help anytime throughout the day, please let me know. If you want more information about the event, keep an eye on the bulletin board in the back hallway.

The Worm Project will hold a banquet and information session this year. I'm not sure of the date, but I think it's in the beginning of November.

The Care 'N' Share Shoppe is a good place to donate unwanted items. It's a good place to shop, on your birthday it's 50% off (remember proof of birthday). And, a good place to volunteer.

The Corner Store at the Souderton Mennonite Homes is a nice place to shop too. Stop by and see their selection. They sell Longacre's ice cream there too!



MOSAIC  
mennonite  
conference

## There's a New Group in Town by Will & Shannon Sadler

We are excited to introduce to you a new ministry here at Swamp: "Loved, Not Lost". The current focus of the ministry is to provide a biblically based support group for parents with a child who identifies as LGBTQ. Our ministry was born out of the need to connect with other parents who are navigating this rather uncharted, and often unspoken about, territory. As a support group, we strive to provide a Christ-centered space that is safe, judgment-free, honest and authentic. During our time together we share very real emotions, questions, things learned/self-discovery, life experiences and encouragement as we journey together. We teach that God is calling us to the healing of our hearts as we recognize our own brokenness and tendency toward judgment, allowing growth in love and humility, while learning to love outwardly and to be Jesus to others.

Our mission is that our children (of any age!) should be 'loved and not lost', and that families stay together. During times of disagreement about a choice or behavior, consistently showing up in love is not condoning, but rather modeling Jesus in the hopes of a changed mind and heart. The story of Jesus shows us the power of the gospel in changing hearts, minds and actions. Our hope is that, as our group learns and our hearts are changed, the broader circle of those watching are inspired and themselves experience the love of Christ rather than the hypocrisy and rejection many have come to expect. We pray that it leads to hearts softened, allowing the Holy Spirit to enter and transformation to take place on a very real and personal level. We commit to our ministry staying rooted in God's Word, as it challenges us in living out Christ's command to love God and love one another.

How can you help? Most importantly, please lift the ministry up in prayer and for God to lead people to us who need to know they aren't alone in their family's journey. "Loved, Not Lost" is intentional about creating a space where families struggling with this feel safe and welcomed, not judged. If you know of a family experiencing this struggle, please encourage interested parents to contact us for more information by email at [sadlers1@verizon.net](mailto:sadlers1@verizon.net).

Thank you.

Loved, Not Lost: A family ministry for parents of an LGBTQ child.



## An Introduction by Arlene Yothers

I would like to introduce to you "THE ORAL HISTORICAL PROJECT". Joel Horst Nofziger, executive director of the Mennonite Heritage Center, introduced me to this project in the beginning of the year. Now, it's my turn to introduce it to you. A number of our young people have been learning more about this project first. This is a way for our young people to record the stories of those among us who are willing to share. The young people have "permission forms" that must be signed by the people sharing. There are recording machines that the young people will use to get your story. They have questions

that they will ask to help you get started. The purpose is to get the youth of our congregation interested in getting to know MORE people than just their age group. For them to hear your story, it will help them get their "stories" started. The recordings will be used by the Heritage Center. They will be transcribed onto another form that can be used by future generations. So, let's work together. Youth, be willing to request an interview with an older person. If you are asked to be interviewed, please say "YES".



## Clubs Begins

Swamp families with children ages 3 (potty trained) through Grade 5 are all welcome to join us on the first and third Wednesday evenings each month beginning September 21 at our Clubs Program. Parents are encouraged to attend an information meeting on the first night of the program after dropping off your children at their classrooms. There will be a meal provided on clubs nights from 6:00-6:30 pm. The program will now be held from 6:30-7:30 pm this year. For more information, please contact Rachel Whary.